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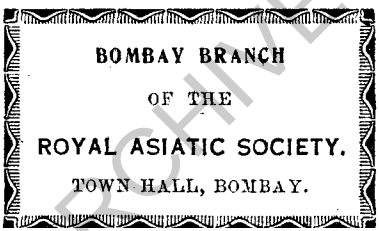

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BENGAL IN 1756-1757

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INDIAN RECORDS SERIES

BENGAL IN 1756-1757

A SELECTION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PAPERS
DEALING WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THE
BRITISH IN BENGAL DURING THE
REIGN OF SIRAJ-UDDAULA

EDITED
WITH NOTES AND AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION
BY S. C. HILL

LATE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE RECORDS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AUTHOR OF 'MAJOR-GENERAL CLAUD MARTIN,'
'THREE FRENCHMEN IN BENGAL'

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1905

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE series of which the present volumes form a first instalment is in some measure an outcome of a suggestion made to the Government of India by the Royal Asiatic Society in June, 1900. The Society then pointed out the service which would be rendered to Oriental learning by the issue of a series of volumes bearing upon the history of India, particularly in ancient and medieval times, such as texts or translations of works by native writers, indexes, monographs, dictionaries of proper names, maps, and other materials for historical research. The suggestion was favourably received by the Government of India, and, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, arrangements have been made for the publication, under the auspices of the Royal Asiatic Society, of an 'Indian Texts Series' on the lines indicated. Several volumes are already in hand, and will be issued in due course.

When adopting the proposal thus made to them, the Government of India decided to extend its scope by preparing a companion series to deal with the more modern history of India. This is to comprise selections, notes, or compilations from the records of the Indian Government, or of the India Office in London, and will be known as the 'Indian Records Series.' The volumes now published will be followed by others on 'The History of Fort William, Calcutta,' containing papers selected by the late Dr. C. R. Wilson; 'The Reports of Streynsham Master on his Tours in Bengal and Madras, 1676-1680,' edited by Sir Richard Temple, Bart., C.I.E.; 'Papers Relating to the Administration of Lord Clive,' by Mr. G. W. Forrest, C.I.E.; and 'The History of Fort St. George and other Public Buildings at Madras,' by Colonel H. D. Love, R.E.

It is only necessary to add that the various editors have full discretion as to the treatment of their subjects, and are therefore alone responsible alike for what is included and what is omitted.

June, 1905.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

	PAGE
PREFATORY NOTE	v
PREFACE	xvii

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER	
I. THE KINGDOM OF BENGAL	xxi
II. THE EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS IN BENGAL	xxxiv
III. THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE NAWAB AND THE BRITISH	xliv
IV THE TREACHEROUS SEIZURE OF COSSIMBAZAR FORT	lvi
V. THE EXPULSION OF THE BRITISH FROM CALCUTTA	lxiii
VI. THE BLACK HOLE	lxxxvi
VII. HOW THE NEWS WAS SENT HOME	xcviii
VIII. THE DEFEAT AND DEATH OF SHAUKAT JANG	cii
IX. THE STAY AT FULTA	cix
X. THE ACTION OF THE MADRAS COUNCIL	cxix
XI. THE EXPEDITION TO BENGAL	cxxv
XII. HUGLI, CHITPUR, AND THE TREATY OF THE 9TH FEBRUARY	cxxxiii
XIII. THE CAPTURE OF CHANDERNAGORE	cxlix
XIV. THE BREAKING OF THE TREATY	cliii
XV. PLASSEY	cxcii
XVI. THE DEATH OF SIRAJ-UDDAULA	cc
XVII. CONCLUSION	ccvi

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

SELECTION OF PAPERS—VOL. I.

NO.		PAGE
1.	Letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to the Council at Masulipatam, 26 April, 1756 - - *Pondicherry Records.*	1
2.	Letter from Messrs. Watts, Collet, and Batson at Cossimbazar to the Council at Fort William, 25 May, 1756 *Madras Records*, 1756.	1
3.	Ditto, ditto. 31 May, 1756. (1) - *Madras Records*, 1756.	2
4.	Ditto, ditto. 31 May, 1756. (2) - *Madras Records*, 1756.	2
5.	Letter from the Nawab at Rajmehal to Coja Wajid, 28 May, 1756 - *Orme MSS., India, IV., p.* 999.	3
6.	Letter from the Nawab at Muxadavad to Coja Wajid, 1 June, 1756 - *Orme MSS., India, IV., p.* 1000.	4
7.	Letter from the Nawab in the way to Calcutta to Coja Wajid. Undated - - - *Orme MSS., India, IV., p.* 1001.	5
8.	Letter from Messrs. Watts, Collet, and Batson at Cossimbazar to the Council at Fort William, 2 June, 1756 *Madras Records*, 1756.	5
9.	Letter from M. Vernet and Council at Cossimbazar to the Dutch Director and Council at Hugli, 3 June, 1756 - - - - *Vernet Papers, The Hague.*	6
10.	Ditto, ditto. 4 June, 1756 - - *Vernet Papers, The Hague.*	7
11.	Letter from Messrs. Watts, Collet, and Batson at Cossimbazar to the Council at Fort William, 4 June, 1756 *Madras Records*, 1756.	8
12.	Letter from Mr. Collet at Cossimbazar to the Council at Fort William, 4 June, 1756 - - - - *Madras Records*, 1756.	9
13.	Letter from Mr. Francis Sykes at Cossimbazar to the Council at Fort William, 4 June, 1756 - - *Madras Records*, 1756.	9
14.	Letter from M. Vernet and the Council at Cossimbazar to the Dutch Director and Council at Hugli, 6 June, 1756 - - - - *Vernet Papers, The Hague.*	10
15.	Letter from the Council at Fort William to the Dutch Director and Council at Hugli, 7 June, 1756 *Bengal Correspondence, The Hague.*	12
16.	Letter from the Council at Fort William to the Council at Fort St. George, 7 June, 1756 - - *Madras Records*, 1756.	12
17.	Letter from the Council at Fort William to the Council at Fort St. George, 8 June, 1756 - - *Madras Records*, 1756.	13
18.	Letter from the Dutch Director and Council at Hugli to the Council at Fort William, 8 June, 1756 *Bengal Correspondence, The Hague.*	14
19.	Letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to M. de la Bretesche at Patna, 9 June, 1756 - - - *Pondicherry Records.*	15
20.	Letter from M. Vernet and the Council at Cossimbazar to M. La Tour at Patna, 10 June, 1756 - - *Vernet Papers, The Hague.*	16
21.	Letter from the Council at Fort William to the Dutch Director and Council at Hugli, 13 June, 1756 *Bengal Correspondence, The Hague.*	16

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

NO. PAGE

22. Letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to the Captain of the French East India Company's Ship in Balasore Road, 15 June, 1756 - - - - - *Pondicherry Records.* 18
23. Letter from the Dutch Director and Council at Hugli to the Council at Fort William, 16 June, 1756 - *Bengal Correspondence, The Hague.* 18
24. Letter from M. Le Conte at Chandernagore to M. Courtin at Dacca, 19 June, 1756 - - - - - - - - - 19
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 9 November, 1756.
25. Letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to M. de la Bretesche at Patna, 20 June, 1756 - - - *Pondicherry Records.* 22
26. Letter from M. Le Conte at Chandernagore to M. Courtin at Dacca, 21 June, 1756 - - - - - - - - 24
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 9 November, 1756.
27. Letter from the Council at Fort William on board the *Dodalay* to Mr. Adrian Bisdom, 25 June, 1756 - - - - 25
Bengal Correspondence, The Hague.
28. Consultations of the Dutch Council at Hugli, 25, 26, and 27 June, 1756 25
Bengal Correspondence, The Hague.
29. Letter from the Dutch Council at Hugli to M. Vernet, 27 June, 1756 - 33
Vernet Papers, The Hague.
30. Dacca Consultations, 27 June, 1756 - - - - - - 34
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 9 November, 1756.
31. Ditto, ditto. 28 June, 1756 - - - - - - - - 36
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 9 November, 1756.
32. Secret Consultations of the Dutch Council at Hugli, 28 June, 1756 - 37
Bengal Correspondence, The Hague.
33. Letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to the Captain of the French East India Company's Ship in Balasore Road, 28 June, 1756 - - - - *Pondicherry Records.* 38
34. Letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to M. de la Bretesche at Patna, 28 June, 1756 - - - *Pondicherry Records.* 39
35. Letter from the Nawab to the Council at Fort St. George, 30 June, 1756 39
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 17 August, 1756.
36. Letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to the Council at Masulipatam, June, 1756 - - - *Pondicherry Records.* 39
37. Captain Mills' Narrative of the Loss of Calcutta with the Black Hole, 7 June to 1 July, 1756 - *Orme MSS., O.V., 19, pp. 77-92.* 40
38. Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore to the Council at Fort St. George, 2 July, 1756 - - - - - 45
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 17 August, 1756.
39. Letter from Chandernagore concerning the Consequences of the Capture of Calcutta, 3 July, 1756 - - - - - - - 48
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 9 November, 1756.
40. Letter from the Dutch Council at Hugli to the Supreme Council at Batavia, 5 July, 1756 - - *State Archives, The Hague.* 53

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

NO. PAGE

41. Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore to the Council at Fort St. George, 6 July, 1756 - 56
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 22 *August*, 1756.

42. Letter from the Council at Fulta on board the *Doddaley* to Messrs. Watts and Collet, 6 July, 1756 - - - - - 57
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 22 *August*, 1756.

43. Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore to the Council at Fort St. George, 7 July, 1756 - - - - - 58
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 22 *August*, 1756.

44. Letter from the Council at Fulta to Coja Wajid, etc. - - - 59
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 22 *August*, 1756.

45. Letter from M. Vernet to M. La Tour, 7 July, 1756 - - - 59
Vernet Papers, The Hague.

46. Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore to the Council at Fulta, 8 July, 1756 - - - - - - 60
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 8 *September*, 1756.

47. Letter from Mr. Sykes at Cossimbazar, 8 July, 1756 - - - 61
Orme MSS., O.V., 19, *pp.* 167, 168.

48. Letter from Mr. John Young from the Hôtel des Prusses to Mr. Roger Drake, 10 July, 1756 - - - - - - 62
Orme MSS., O.V., 19, *pp.* 53-56; *and India, IV., p.* 944.

49. Protest of the Late Inhabitants of Calcutta against Mr. Charles Manningham's going to the Coast, 10 July, 1756 - - - 66
Orme MSS., O.V., 19, *p.* 59; *Orme MSS., India, IV., p.* 749.

50. Letter from the Council at Dacca to the Court of Directors, 12 July, 1756 67
Parl. Sel. Com. Rep., p. 212; *I.O., Bengal Letters Recd.*, 1757, *p.* 239.

51. Letter from the Council at Fulta to Messrs. Watts and Collet, 13 July, 1756 *Fort St. George Public Consultations*, 8 *September*, 1756. 70

52. Letter from the Council at Fulta to the Council at Fort St. George, 13 July, 1756 - - - - - - - 71
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 29 *August*, 1756.

53. An Account of the Capture of Calcutta by Captain Grant, 13 July, 1756 73
British Museum Additional MS., 29, 209.

54. An Account of Captain Grant's Retreat from Calcutta - - - 89
Orme MSS., O.V., 19, *pp.* 173-180.

55. Letter from the Council at Dacca to the Council at Fort St. George, 13 July, 1756 - - - - - - - 95
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 8 *September*, 1756.

56. Extract from Fort St. George Public Consultations, 14 July, 1756 - 96

57. Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore to the Council at Fulta, 14 July, 1756 - - - - - - 97
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 8 *September*, 1756.

58. Notification to the Honourable Company's Covenanted Servants on board the Fleet, 14 July, 1756 - - - - - 98
Orme MSS., O.V., 19, *p.* 52; *and India, IV., p.* 943.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

NO. PAGE

59. Extract from Fort St. George Select Committee Consultations, 14 July, 1756 - - - - - - - - - 99

60. Letter from Mr. Roger Drake on board the *Syren* off Fulta to the Council at Fort St. George, 14 July, 1756 - - - - - 99
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 29 *August*, 1756.

61. Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore to the Court of Directors, 16 July, 1756 - - - - - - - 99
I.O., *Home Series*, *Misc.*, 94; *Bengal Letters Recd.*, 1757, *p.* 216.

62. Account of the Loss of Calcutta by Mr. Grey, junior, June, 1756 - 106
I.O., *Home Series*, *Misc.*, 94; *Bengal Letters Recd.*, 1757, *p.* 231; *Orme MSS.*, *India*, *IV.*, *p.* 821.

63. Duplicate Letters from Mr. J. Z. Holwell at Muxadavad to the Councils at Bombay and Fort St. George, 17 July, 1756 - - - 109
I.O., *Bengal Letters Recd.*, *p.* 199; *Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations*, 28 *September*, 1756.

64. Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore to the Court of Directors, 17 July, 1756 *I.O.*, *Home Series*, *Misc.*, 94. 116

65. Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore to the Council at Fort St. George, 18 July, 1756 - - - - 118
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 8 *September*, 1756.

66. Governor Drake's Narrative, 19 July, 1756 - - - - 118
Orme MSS., *India*, *IV.*, *pp.* 956-1001; *I.O.*, *Home Series*, *Misc.*, 192.

67. Declaration by Mr. Francis Sykes - - - - - 162
Orme MSS., *India*, *IV.*, *pp.* 1001, 1002.

68. Letter from Mr. W. Lindsay on board the *Syren* off Fulta to Mr. Robert Orme concerning the Loss of Calcutta, July, 1756, with 'List of Company's servants saved.' - - - 163
Orme MSS., *India*, *IV.*, *p.* 818; *O.V.*, 19, *pp.* 125-142.

69. Letter to M. Demontorcin from Chandernagore, 1 August, 1756 - 173
Bibliothèque Nationale, *Paris*, *No.* 9,161.

70. Letter from Mr. J. Z. Holwell at Hugli to the Council at Fort St. George, 3 August, 1756, with various Lists - - - 185
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 28 *September*, 1756.

71. Letter from Major Killpatrick on board the *Delawar* off Fulta, to the Council at Fort St. George, 5 August, 1756 - - - 192
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 28 *September*, 1756.

72. Captain Mills' Account of what happened to him after he came out of the Black Hole, 10 August, 1756 - - - - - 194
Orme MSS., *India*, *VII.*, *p.* 1826.

73. Letter from the Council at Vizagapatam to the Council at Fort St. George, 13 August, 1756 - *Madras Records*, 1756. 195

74. Fort St. George Public Consultations, 17 August, 1756, containing Letters from the Nawab to Mr. Pigot and M. Renault - - 195

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

NO. PAGE

75. Letter from the Council at Fulta to the Council at Fort St. George, 18 August, 1756 - - - - - - - - - 197
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 28 September, 1756.

76. Letter from the Secret Committee at Fulta to the Council at Fort St. George, 19 August, 1756 - - - - 198
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 28 September, 1756.

77. Letter from the Council at Fort St. George to Admiral Watson - 199
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 20 August, 1756; Orme MSS., India, III.

78. Extract from Fulta Consultations, 20 August, 1756 - - - - 200

79. Mr. Holwell's Minute and Dissent in Council, 20 August, 1756 - - 201
Holwell, India Tracts, p. 333.

80. Mr. Holwell's Minute on the Fulta Consultations, 13 August, 1756 - 202
Holwell, India Tracts, p. 333.

81. Letter from the President to Mr. Holwell, 12 August, 1756 - - - 204
Holwell, India Tracts, p. 336.

82. Extract from Fort St. George Select Committee Consultations, 21 August, 1756 - - - - - - - - - 204

83. Extract from Secret Committee Proceedings at Fulta, 22 August, 1756 204
Fort William Select Com. Consultations.

84. Letter from M. Fournier at Chandernagore to M. le Marquis Dupleix at Paris, 24 August, 1756 - - - - - - - - 204
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, No. 9,165.

85. Letter from Admiral Watson to the Council at Fort St. George, 25 August, 1756 - - - *I.O., Home Series, Misc., 94, p. 168.* 206

86. Letter from M. Renault at Chandernagore to M. le Marquis Dupleix, 26 August, 1756 - *Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, No. 9,165.* 206

87. Letter from Mr. Manningham at Masulipatam to the Council at Fort St. George, 28 August, 1756 - - - - - - - 212
Fort St. George Public Consultations, 6 September, 1756.

88. Letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to the Council at Masulipatam, 29 August, 1756 - - - *Pondicherry Records.* 213

89. Letter from the Council at Fulta to the Court of Directors, 17 September, 1756 - - - - - - - - 214
I.O., Bengal Letters Recd., 1757; Par. Sel. Com. Rep., 1773.

90. Letter from the Council at Fulta to the Council at Fort St. George, 17 September, 1756 - - - - - - - - 219
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 9 November, 1756.

91. Opinion of the Select Committee at Fort St. George as to the conditions of the Expedition to Bengal - - - - - 222
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 29 September, 1756.

92. Fort St. George Select Committee Consultations, 1 October, 1756 - - - - - - - - - 223

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

PAGE

93. Letter from Isle de France to the Directors at Paris, 2 October, 1756 227
Archives Nationales, Paris.

94. Letter from Colonel Clive at Fort St. George to his Father, 5 October, 1756 - - *Clive Correspondence, Walcot, Vol. XI.* 227

95. Return of Troops ordered for Bengal, 5 October, 1756 - - - 228
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 5 October, 1756.

96. Letter from Colonel Clive at Fort St. George to Mr. W. Mabbot, 6 October, 1756 - - *Clive Correspondence, Walcot, Vol. XI.* 228

97. Letter from Colonel Clive at Fort St. George to Mr. Roger Drake, senior, 7 October, 1756 *Clive Correspondence, Walcot, Vol. XI.* 229

98. Letter from M. Baussett at Chandernagore to M. le Marquis Dupleix, 8 October, 1756 - *Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, No.* 9,162. 229

99. Letter from M. de Leyrit at Pondicherry to the Council at Fort St. George, 9 October, 1756 - *Madras Records*, 1756. 232

100. Letter from Colonel Clive at Fort St. George to the Secret Committee at London, 11 October, 1756 - - - - - 232
Clive Correspondence, Walcot, Vol. I.; Orme MSS., India, X., p. 2350.

101. Letter from the Council at Fort St. George to Colonel Clive, 13 October, 1756 - - - - - - 233
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 13 October, 1756.

102. Letter from the Council at Fulta to the Council at Fort St. George, 13 October, 1756 - - - - - - - 237
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 9 December, 1756.

103. Letter from the Select Committee at Fort St. George to the Select Committee at Fort William, 13 October, 1756 - - - 237
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 13 October, 1756.

104. Letter from Mr. Pigot to the Nawab of Bengal, 14 October, 1756 - 241
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 13 October, 1756.

105. Letter from M. Barthelemy at Pondicherry to M. de Moras, 16 October, 1756 - - - - *Archives Coloniales, Paris.* 243

106. Letter from Mr. J. Z. Holwell at Fulta to the Council at Fulta, 25 October, 1756 *I.O., Bengal Letters Recd.; Holwell, India Tracts, p.* 337. 244

107. Fulta Consultations, 25 October, 1756 - - - - - 247
I.O., Cor. Mem., 1757, No. 16 (*ap. to General Letter of 31 Jan., 1757*).

108. Letter from Mr. W. Tooke at Fulta to the Council at Fulta, 10 November, 1756 - *Orme MSS., India, IV., p.* 943; *O.V.*, 19, *p.* 51. 248

109. Narrative of the Capture of Calcutta from 10 April, 1756, to 10 November, 1756, by W. Tooke - - - - - 248
Orme MSS., India, IV., p. 885; *O.V.*, 19, *pp.* 5-46.

110. Letter from the Select Committee at Fort St. George to Admiral Watson, 13 November, 1756 - - - - - 301
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 13 November, 1756.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

NO. PAGE

111. Letter from the Select Committee at Fort St. George to the Select Committee at Fort William, 14 November, 1756 - - - 302
Fort St. George Select Com. Consultations, 13 November, 1756.

112. Letter from the Dutch Council at Hugli to the Supreme Council at Batavia, 24 November, 1756 - *State Archives, The Hague.* 302

MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

I. Bengal (*after Rennell*) - - - - - - xxi

II. Siraj-uddaula. *From Major J. H. Tull Walsh's 'Murshidabad'* xliv

III. William Watts. *From a painting in the possession of E. H. Watts, Esq.* - - - - - - - lvi

IV. Bigam Johnson. *From a painting in the possession of E. H. Watts, Esq.* - - - - - - - lx

V. The Environs of Fort William (*after Lieutenant Wells*) - - lxx

VI. John Zephaniah Holwell. *From a painting in the possession of the Trustees of the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta* - - lxxxvi

VII. Admiral Watson. *From an engraving by Fisher after a painting by Hudson* - - - - - - - - cxx

VIII. Lord Clive. *From an engraving by Bartolozzi after a painting by Dance, in the possession of the Earl of Powis* - - cxxxiii

IX. Plan of Chandernagore. *By Mouchet* - - - - cli

X. Battle of Plassey. *From Broome's 'History of the Bengal Army'* cxcv

XI. Muhammadan Women Mourning. *From Hodges' 'Travels in India, 1780-83'* - - - - - - ccviii

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CORRIGENDA.

Page 15, line 15, *for* Brisdom *read* Bisdom.
Page 96, line 19, *for* Beecher *read* Becher.
Page 110, note 2, *refers to* Mrs. Piearce's Bridge, *and not to* Griffith's House.
Page 192, line 1, *for* Kilpatrick *read* Killpatrick.
Page 204, line 24, *for* Furnier *read* Fournier.
Page 227, line 21, *for* Clenforts *read* Clonfert.
Page 228, lines 11 and 15, *for* 573 *read* 595.
Page 229, line 13, *for* 1753 *read* 1756.
Page 257, *delete* note 1.
Page 266, line 37, *delete* Probably means.
Page 273, line 38, *for* pp. 306, 307 *read* pp. 307, 308.
Page 276, line 31, *for* Home Series Misc. 24 *read* Home Series Misc 82.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

PREFACE.

THE object of this Selection of Papers is to throw as much light as possible upon the Revolution by which the power of the Muhammadan Government was broken up, and the way prepared for British domination, in Bengal.

For this purpose I have myself examined not only the Records in Calcutta, but those in London, Paris, and the Hague. The publication of an admirable Press List of their Records by the Government of Madras made a personal examination of these documents unnecessary; and a few Records from Pondicherry, which I have included, were sent me by the French authorities. The Right Honourable the Earl of Powis most kindly gave me access to the family papers used by Malcolm in his 'Life of Robert, Lord Clive.' Their great value lies in the fact that many of them are private letters, in which Clive freely expressed his feelings to friends or relatives. They are, I think, necessary to the full appreciation of his many-sided character; and if they detract in any degree from its heroic aspect, they at any rate make him more human, and so the student is better able to understand the part played in the events of the time by his colleagues, Drake and Watson, whom History has relegated to an inferior position, or men like Watts and Scrafton, who worthily filled subordinate yet necessary parts, but are now almost forgotten.

In making this Selection my two chief difficulties were the absence of documentary evidence upon certain points, and the superabundance of information upon others. The former has been partially overcome by the discovery amongst the Dutch Records of copies of letters from the Council of Fort William, the originals of which have disappeared.[1] As regards the latter difficulty, I have

[1] Amongst these is the Council's declaration of war against the Nawab after the recapture of Calcutta, Vol. II., p. 83.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

excluded all those papers and portions of papers which I consider of little importance or which seem to have no distinctive historical bearing. I may mention that in the middle of the eighteenth century communication between England and India was so tedious that an exchange of letters generally occupied a whole year; consequently, the despatches, or 'general letters,' of the East India Company to its Settlements, as also the replies from those Settlements, are lengthy documents dealing with a multitude of different subjects, more especially those connected with commerce. This has forced me to omit long passages from these letters, but as references are given in the 'Contents' to the sources from which I have taken my originals, the student can if he pleases refer to them himself without much trouble.

The documents selected from the French and Dutch Records have never, I believe, been published, though I think it is certain that Colonel Malleson must have had access to many of the former. The difference of tone in the Records of the two nations marks very clearly the fact that the Dutch were our allies and the French our enemies, and, in truth, some of the French papers have been included not because of their historical value as accurate accounts of what really happened, but as written records of the rumours and beliefs prevalent at the time amongst the people of the land; for action is based rather upon belief than upon fact, and, without knowing what the people and the Native Government thought of the British, it is not possible to understand clearly either why Siraj-uddaula behaved as he did, or why the inhabitants of Bengal were absolutely apathetic to events which handed over the government of their country to a race so different from their own. I translated all the French documents and a few of the Dutch myself. Translations of the remainder were sent me by Dr. Colenbrander.

As regards the Indian Government Records, amongst which we have to include the Orme Manuscripts, there is decidedly less novelty. Some important papers were published by Malcolm; others more recently by Colonel Temple and that delightful writer, Dr. Busteed, in whose pages, as in those of the Rev. H. B. Hyde and the late Dr. C. R. Wilson, there are many suggestions as to possible sources of information. A very large number of papers was

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

published over a hundred years ago by Holwell, Verelst, Vansittart, Ives, Watts, and Scrafton, and also in the Reports of the Parliamentary Select Committees on Indian Affairs, not to mention the newspapers, magazines, and Government Gazettes. About twelve years ago my predecessor, Mr. G. W. Forrest, C.I.E., caused a large collection of papers from the Madras Records (covering the whole period during which Clive was in India) to be printed in the Government Central Press at Calcutta. This rendered it unnecessary to make fresh copies of several of the Records included in this Selection, and so saved much time and trouble. These have, of course, been compared in every instance with originals in London or Madras.

I ought to add that the idea of including extracts from the magazines and newspapers of the period (Appendix II.) was suggested by Mr. T. R. Munro's discovery of some lists of the Black Hole victims in the *Scots Magazine*.

The question of the most suitable spelling of Indian words and names of persons and places has been one of much difficulty. To modernize them entirely would have altered the whole complexion of the old Records. I have tried, therefore, merely to observe something like uniformity in each particular document, and have given in the introduction and index the correct spelling according to the accepted system of transliteration for the various languages to which the words and names belong. I presume no apology is necessary for alterations in the punctuation, though even here I have left the old punctuation in all cases where an alteration was not absolutely necessary to make the meaning intelligible.

To the Selection is prefixed an Historical Introduction based mainly upon the documents now published, but partly upon the works of contemporary writers like Orme, Ives, Holwell, Scrafton, Watts, and Ghulam Husain Khan. In this Introduction I have dealt in greatest detail with points which, I believe, have not been cleared up by earlier writers, or in regard to which I think previous conclusions need some modification. At the same time, as I know well that neither official records nor contemporary writers are always absolutely trustworthy, I have tried to avoid all criticism of the statements and opinions of my predecessors.

The illustrations which will be found in this work have been

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

taken from various well-known sources, with the exception of the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Watts and the picture of Mr. Watts concluding the Treaty with Mir Jafar and his son Miran. These have been photographed from pictures in the possession of Mr. E. H. Watts of Hanslope Park, Buckinghamshire, and are now for the first time presented to the public.

Amongst the many persons from whom I have received much valuable assistance I wish more particularly to offer my thanks to Lieutenant-Colonel D. G. Crawford, I.M.S., M. Henri Omont and M. Charles de la Roncière of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, Dr. Colenbrander of the State Archives at the Hague, Mr. J. A. Herbert of the British Museum, and Messrs. A. N. Wollaston, C.I.E., William Foster, and F. W. Thomas of the India Office. Prof. Blumhardt has very kindly assisted me in identifying many almost unrecognisable names of persons and places.

The very laborious task of correcting the proofs and comparing them with the original documents has been performed by Miss Hughes of the Royal Asiatic Society, to whom I am much indebted for the care and pains she has bestowed upon a piece of work the difficulty of which can be appreciated only by the few persons who have had to deal with similar papers.

S. C. H.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE KINGDOM OF BENGAL.

'The Paradise of India.'—J. LAW.[1]

THE kingdom of Bengal, a province subject to the Emperors of Delhi, comprised in the middle of the eighteenth century the three districts of Bengal Proper, Bahar, and Orissa, and occupied the lower valleys of the Himalayas and the deltas of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers. It was governed by Nawabs or deputies of the Emperor, sometimes appointed from Delhi, but more often merely confirmed by their nominal master in an office which they had seized by force, and which they strove to make hereditary. For five hundred years these Nawabs had been, by race if not by birth, foreigners to Bengal. They were Afghans,[2] Moghuls, or Persians.

Without entering into detail, it is sufficient to say that the British on their arrival in Bengal found it inhabited by a people the great bulk of whom were Hindus, governed by a Muhammadan minority. The Nawabs, relying as they did for their supremacy on a foreign soldiery, considered it wise to hold their warlike followers in check by the employment of up-country Hindus in many of the high offices of State, both civil and military, and in the government of subordinate divisions of the kingdom. These Hindus were especially influential in matters of finance, for the commerce of the province was almost entirely in the hands of great merchants, most of whom were up-country Hindus, like Omichand and the Seths, though a few were Armenians, like Coja Wājid and Aga Manuel. Most of the leading men in the country then were foreigners, and

[1] Vol. III., p. 160, note.

[2] Afghan and Pathan are used synonymously.—*Wilson*.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the real Bengalis were seldom of sufficient importance to be mentioned by native historians, though in the 'Records' of the East India Company occur the names of such men as Govind Rām Mitra and Raja Naba Krishna, the founders of families which have risen to wealth and influence under British rule.

We know very little of Bengal and its inhabitants previous to the Muhammadan invasion in A.D. 1200, but certain minor districts were long left in the hands of the Hindu nobles, and in the pages of Scrafton and Holwell we find descriptions of parts of Bengal which retained even in 1750 many traces of the primitive Hindu manners and government. But these were exceptions, and the Bengali nation had become a subject race absorbed in the ordinary concerns of life, and apathetic to all affairs of State and government. Temperate and abstemious, charitable, ready to sacrifice their lives for the preservation of their religious purity, their women chaste and affectionate, they were

'almost strangers to many of those passions that form the pleasure and pain of our lives. Love—at least, all the violent tumults of it—is unknown to the Gentoos' (Hindus) 'by their marrying so young. . . . Ambition is effectually restrained by their religion, which has by insurmountable barriers confined every individual to a limited sphere, and all those follies arising from debauchery are completely curbed by their abstaining from all intoxicating liquors. But from hence also they are strangers to that vigor of mind and all the virtues grafted on those passions which animate our more active spirits. . . . Their temperance and the enervating heat of the climate starves all the natural passions, and leaves them only avarice, which preys most on the narrowest minds.'[1]

It may seem strange that a people so gentle, peaceful, and apparently docile, should have changed so slightly under five hundred years of Muhammadan rule, but this absence of change is easily explicable by the existence of the institution which we call 'caste.' This, with its multitudinous subdivisions, broke up the Hindus into a number of groups, the individuals of which were bound for life to the sphere in which they were born, and the same principle which made a country like Bengal, in which the soldier caste was almost extinct, submit without effort to an invader, was the means of preserving uninfluenced the trades, manufactures, and occupations of the other castes;

[1] Scrafton's 'Reflections on the Government, etc., of Indostan,' p. 16.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

'for while the son can follow no other trade than that of his father, the manufactures can be lost only by exterminating the people.'[1]

It is easy to see also that this indifference of the mass of the people towards the Government would be a serious drawback to a weak Government in the event of conflict with external forces, and would become a source of very great danger if, by misgovernment, indifference were changed into dislike. The accounts of Muhammadan rule by Muhammadan writers do not, I must own, show any signs of such misgovernment as would impel an Oriental race to revolt—in fact, I think every student of social history will confess that the condition of the peasantry in Bengal in the middle of the eighteenth century compared not unfavourably with that of the same class in France or Germany—but it would seem as if there was at this time a revival of Hindu feeling coincident with the gradual weakening of the Muhammadan power throughout India as a whole and more particularly in Bengal. Thus, we find that the partisans of the British were almost all Hindus or protégés of the Hindus, and M. Law tells us that the Hindu *Zamīndārs* of Bahar would have replaced Sirāj-uddaula by a Hindu ruler if it had not been for the influence of the Seths. The disaffection of the Hindu Rajas to the Muhammadan Government had been noticed by other observers—*e.g.*, Colonel Scot wrote to his friend Mr. Noble in 1754 that

'the *Jentue*' (Hindu) 'rajahs and inhabitants were much disaffected to the Moor' (Muhammadan) 'Government, and secretly wished for a change and opportunity of throwing off their tyrannical yoke.'[2]

The fact that the commerce and manufactures of the country were almost entirely in the hands of the Hindus naturally brought them into close connection with the European merchants, who had settled in the country for the purpose of trade, and so produced a kind of tacit alliance based mainly upon their material interests.

The story of the settlement of the Europeans in Bengal has been told by many writers, and it is therefore unnecessary to go back to an earlier date than the year 1700, when the British were already settled at Calcutta or Fort William, the French at Chander-

[1] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 9. [2] Vol. III., p. 328.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

nagore or Fort d'Orléans, and the Dutch at Chinsurah or Fort Gustavus. These Settlements were wealthy and flourishing, and to the natives, who were unacquainted with the science of fortification, they appeared strong and well able to defend themselves against any attack by the native Government. It can therefore be easily understood how there gradually grew up in the minds of the Bengali Hindus an idea that if the worst came to the worst they might find in the presence of these foreigners a means of escape from the ills by which they were oppressed.

The chief events which took place in Bengal from the beginning of the eighteenth century were as follows:

1701-1725. In the year 1701 a Brahman convert to Muhammadanism named Murshid Kulī Khān[1] was appointed *Dīwān*, or financial representative of the Emperor of Delhi in Bengal. He quarrelled with the Governor, Nawab Azīm-ushshān,[2] and transferred his office from Dacca (the capital of the province) to the town of Muksadabad, which, in 1704, he renamed after himself Murshidabad, though he did not receive the double office of Governor and *Dīwān* till the year 1713. His influence at Murshidabad was speedily felt by the Europeans. As early as 1706 he exacted 25,000 rupees from the British in return for permission to establish a Factory at Cossimbazar, so as to facilitate the coining of their bullion at the Royal Mint in Murshidabad. By 1713 his jealousy and exactions had grown so troublesome that the British sent an embassy under Mr. Surman to Delhi to obtain a new *Farmān* or Patent[3] from the Emperor. This was granted in the 1717. year 1717, and was produced in triumph at Murshidabad; but Murshid Kulī Khān chose to interpret it in a sense much less liberal than that taken by the British, and the latter thought it prudent to feign contentment with his wishes, for at any rate, even with the modifications he proposed, it legalized their position, and also gave them immense advantages over their commercial rivals, the French and Dutch.

Murshid Kulī Khān was the author of many financial reforms, which greatly increased the Emperor's revenues in Bengal; but his rule was a heavy one, especially to the Hindus. It is said

[1] Better known amongst the natives as Jafar Khān or Jafar Khān Nāsirī.

[2] Second son of Bahādur Shāh, Emperor of Delhi —*Beale.*

[3] Vol. III., p. 375.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

that he destroyed all the Hindu temples in Murshidabad and for four miles round to provide materials for his tomb at Katra.[1] On the other hand, it was during his reign that the great financial house of Jagat Seth rose to the pinnacle of its wealth and greatness. This family was founded by a Jain[2] merchant named Mānik Chand, who died in 1732, but who had apparently handed over the management of his business in Bengal to his nephew, Fath Chand. In 1713, when Murshid Kulī Khān was made Governor of Bengal, Fath Chand was appointed Imperial Banker, and given the title of 'Jagat Seth,' or 'Merchant of the World.' He died in 1744, and left his business to his grandsons, Seth Mahtāb Rai and Maharaja Swarūp Chand, whom we shall find figuring largely in the history of the Revolution.[3] In the English accounts no distinction is made between Fath Chand's grandsons, and they are generally referred to simply as 'Jagat Seth,' or the Seths. The importance of the firm at Murshidabad was very great.

'Juggutseat is in a manner the Government's banker; about two-thirds of the revenues are paid into his house, and the Government give their draught on him in the same manner as a merchant on the Bank, and by what I can learn the Seats (*Seths*) make yearly by this business about 40 lacks.'[4]

Murshid Kulī Khān died in 1725, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, Shujā Khān, a noble of Turkoman origin, whose family came originally from Khorassan in Persia. 1725-1739.

Amongst the favourites of Shujā Khān were two brothers, Hājī Ahmad and Alīvirdī Khān, sons of Mirzā Muhammad, a Turkoman, and

'husband of a lady who, being herself of the Afshar tribe, was allied to Shuja Khan.'[5]

It is said they entered his service in an almost menial capacity, the elder as his pipe-bearer, the younger, a man of more martial character, in an inferior military position; but the Hājī's[6] ability

[1] In the town of Murshidabad.

[2] The Jains are a Hindu sect contemporary in origin with the Buddhists, and resembling them in many of their tenets.

[3] Hunter, 'Statistical Account of Bengal,' vol. ix., pp. 252-258.

[4] 'An account of the Seats in 1757 from Mr. Scrafton' (Orme MSS., India, vol. xviii., pp. 5441-5443).

[5] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. i., p. 298, edition of 1902.

[6] Hājī means properly one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and thus it is often used as a title.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

was so great that he speedily became the Nawab's confidential adviser, and so completely were the brothers trusted by that Prince that in 1729 Alīvirdī was made Governor of the frontier province of Patna or Bahar. In the same year was born Mirzā Muhammad, better known as Sirāj-uddaula. He was the son of Alīvirdī's youngest and favourite nephew, Zain-uddīn, and the coincidence of his birth with the auspicious appointment to the government of Patna is said to have been the origin of the extraordinary fondness which his grandfather always showed towards him.

1739-1741. Shujā Khān, whose reign was long looked back to as one of peace and good government, died in 1739, leaving to his son and successor, Sarfarāz Khān, a dangerous legacy in his two favourites, Hājī Ahmad and Alīvirdī Khān. It cannot be said with any certainty when these two men first cast ambitious eyes upon the throne, but as early as 1736,[1] by the interest of the great bankers, the Seths, the Hājī had obtained from the Emperor at Delhi a *farmān* appointing Alīvirdī Nawab of Patna in his own right. It is probable that Shujā Khān would have taken steps to check the growing ambition of the brothers, but his death intervened, and Sarfarāz Khān, who, it is said,

'indulged in excessive debauchery even to that degree as to disorder his faculties, soon rendered himself odious to his people, and lost the affections of those who might have supported him,'[2]

took no steps to secure himself from the growing danger. He also gave great offence to the Seths, the nature of which is variously stated as an attack upon the honour of their women[3] and as a quarrel about money.[4] This quarrel resulted in a firm alliance between the brothers and the Seths. As long as Hājī Ahmad remained at Murshidabad Alīvirdī was afraid to take action, and accordingly Sarfarāz Khān was cleverly duped into dismissing him, the Seths representing that the Hājī, being destitute of military skill and even of courage, could be of no assistance to his brother. Alīvirdī now immediately marched upon Murshidabad, protesting that he was loyal to his Prince, and sought only for justice upon his brother's enemies. Deceived by these pretences, Sarfarāz Khān made no effort until too late to raise an

[1] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 33. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 33. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 34.
[4] Hunter, 'Statistical Account of Bengal,' vol. ix., p. 256.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

army, and then his hasty levies were easily defeated by Alīvirdī at Gheriah in January, 1741.[1] Sarfarāz Khān, who

'scorned to give way to the rebels,'[2]

was killed on the field of battle, and Alīvirdī, entering Murshidabad as a conqueror,

'soon showed he wanted only a just title to make him worthy of this high station. Contrary to the general practice, he shed no blood after this action, contenting himself with putting Suffraz Caun's children under gentle confinement.'[3]

This reluctance to shed blood unnecessarily is characteristic of Alīvirdī, and must be placed in the balance against his treachery to the family of his benefactor, Shujā Khān. It descended to his daughter, Amīna Begam, whose advice to her son, Sirāj-uddaula, was always on the side of mercy.[4]

Though he had gained the throne with ease, Alīvirdī was not 1741-1756
destined to enjoy a peaceful reign. In the year following his accession the Marathas invaded the country to enforce their claim, sanctioned by the Emperors of Delhi, to the payment of the *chauth*, or fourth part of the revenues, and the unhappy Bengalis had now to suffer at the hands of their co-religionists all the innumerable miseries of a foreign invasion. Alīvirdī, with dauntless courage, consummate military skill, and the most unscrupulous treachery, defended his provinces through ten long years of varying fortune, until the mutual exhaustion of both parties compelled him to grant, and the Marathas to accept, in 1751, the cession of Orissa, and an annual payment of 12 *lakhs* of rupees in lieu of all their claims. Alīvirdī had already, in 1750, compounded with Mansūr Alī Khān, *Wazīr* of the Emperor, for an annual payment of 52 *lakhs* of rupees in return for a *farmān* confirming him as Nawab of Bengal. Apparently he never paid this tribute.

From this time until his death Alīvirdī reigned in peace, disturbed only by palace intrigues and the unruliness of his favourite, Sirāj-uddaula, who, impatient for the succession, had even gone so far

[1] Broome, Captain Arthur, 'History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army,' p. 40. Beale gives the date as the 29th April, 1740.

[2] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 35.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 36. [4] Vol. I., pp. lxi., 20; Vol. II., p. 3.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

as to rebel against his grandfather in the year 1750. Alīvirdī was only too eager to forgive the young man. His fondness for him originated in superstition, and partook of dotage. The naturally evil effects of the education then given in Bengal to the children of Muhammadan nobles[1] was intensified in the case of Sirāj-uddaula by his grandfather's folly,[2] with the result that he indulged himself in every caprice,

'making no distinction between vice and virtue, and paying no regard to the nearest relations, he carried defilement wherever he went, and, like a man alienated in his mind, he made the houses of men and women of distinction the scenes of his profligacy, without minding either rank or station. In a little time he became as detested as Pharao, and people on meeting him by chance used to say, "God save us from him."'[3]

These are the words of the native historian Ghulām Husain Khān, one of his own relatives,[4] and the belief that he had disordered his intellect by his excesses was generally held by all observers,[5] and is the best excuse for the crimes which he committed.

His grandfather was not blind to his favourite's character, and said,

'in full company, that as soon as himself should be dead, and Siraj-uddaula should succeed him, the Hatmen' (*i.e.*, Europeans) 'would possess themselves of all the shores of India.'[6]

He therefore thought it wise to take precautions against that habit which of all is most dangerous to a tyrant—namely, intemperance, and during his last illness exacted from Sirāj-uddaula an oath on the Koran to abstain from drink. To this promise Sirāj-uddaula is said to have rigidly adhered, but it was too late—his mind was already affected.[7]

It is curious to remember that the oath on the Koran, which seems to have been the sole bond that Sirāj-uddaula respected,

[1] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' pp. 19, 20.

[2] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., pp. 66, 88.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 122.

[4] In the 'Seir Mutaqherin,' Ghulām Husain is said to have been son of a sister of Sirāj-uddaula's father, and, therefore, his cousin. In the *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1801, 'Characters,' p. 28, it is stated that his maternal grandfather was son to the aunt of Alīvirdī Khān.

[5] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 50.

[6] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 163.

[7] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 50.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

was to prove, in his hour of danger, only a broken reed when he exacted it from Mīr Jafar, a man much more honourable than himself.

A long series of deaths prepared the way for Sirāj-uddaula's accession to the throne. His father, Zain-uddīn,[1] was killed by Afghan mercenaries in 1747, and Alīvirdī's elder brother, Hājī Ahmad, perished at the same time. In 1752 Alīvirdī publicly 1752. declared Sirāj-uddaula his heir,[2] in spite of the claims of his two uncles, Nawāzish Muhammad, known as the Chota Nawab, and Sayyid Ahmad, Governor of Purneah. Nawāzish Muhammad had been wild in his youth, but had sobered down with age. He was immensely rich and charitable, and the darling of the people. He was, however, unambitious, and his whole interest in life centred in the person of Fazl Kulī Khān, Sirāj-uddaula's younger brother, whom he had adopted. The sudden death of this young Prince broke his uncle's heart, and he died in 1755,[3] though not until he had weakly assented to the murder by Sirāj-uddaula of his Minister, Hasan Kulī Khān, a man of great influence and ability, who was the life and soul of the party opposed to Sirāj-uddaula ever since Alīvirdī had declared him his successor. With Hasan Kulī Khān perished his brother, Husain-uddīn. Shocked and terrified by these murders, Sirāj-uddaula's other uncle thought it wise to retire to his government of Purneah. He did so, and died soon after his brother.[4]

Sirāj-uddaula was now free from all possible rivals, except Murād-uddaula, the infant son of Fazl Kulī Khān, who had been adopted by Ghasīta Begam, the wealthy widow of his uncle, Nawāzish Muhammad, and his cousin, Shaukat Jang, who had succeeded Sayyid Ahmad as Governor of Purneah, and who enjoyed, quite undeservedly, much popularity in the country. Neither of these was a very formidable rival, but their union might be dangerous, and Sirāj-uddaula's own reputation was so evil that the wish became father to the thought, and whilst some, like the British, went so far as to consider his accession an impossibility,[5] the

[1] See family table, Vol. III., p. 378. [2] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 48.

[3] 17th December, 1755. 'Seir Mutaqherin,' ii., 127. The French (Vol. I., pp. 174, 175) say he was poisoned, but Ghulām Husain Khān asserts that he died of dropsy.

[4] 26th January, 1756. 'Seir Mutaqherin,' ii., 150.

[5] Vol. I., p. 207.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

other Europeans all expected at any rate a disputed accession.[1] Alīvirdī set himself to prevent this from happening. The most dangerous of Sirāj-uddaula's enemies—Hasan Kulī Khān—had been removed, and to ensure his accession all that remained was to provide him with strong supporters. The most influential people at Court were the Court Bankers, the Seths, who were devoted to Alīvirdī, and who might be relied upon to support Sirāj-uddaula, Mīr Jafar Alī Khān, who had married Alīvirdī's half-sister, and was *Bakhshī—i.e.*, Paymaster and Commander-in-Chief of the Army—and the *Dīwān*, Rāi Durlabh, a Hindu, who, though he had no reputation for courage, also held a command in the army. Rāi Durlabh was secured by presents, and Mīr Jafar readily swore on the Koran to stand by Sirāj-uddaula. Mīr Jafar was a man of great influence, and reputed to be honest and loyal. He had distinguished himself at an early date, even before the accession of Alīvirdī, by capturing, in 1733-1734, the fort of Banki-bazar from the servants of the Ostend Company after a most gallant defence.[2] In the wars with the Marathas he is said in one battle to have killed no less than ten of the enemy with his own hands, and to have saved the army of Alīvirdī from annihilation.

Having made sure of these important personages in favour of his grandson, Alīvirdī felt that he had done everything necessary, even though all attempts to reconcile Sirāj-uddaula with his aunt Ghasīta Begam were in vain. Whilst still labouring at this hopeless task Alīvirdī Khān died of dropsy on April 10, 1756,[3] at the age of eighty-two, and was buried in the garden of Khush Bāgh, near Murshidabad. Orme thus describes the great Nawab:

10th April, 1756.

'His public character is sufficiently delineated by his actions; his private life was very different from the usual manners of a Mahometan prince in Indostan; for he was always extremely temperate, had no pleasures, kept no Seraglio, and always lived the husband of one wife.'[4]

We must here pause for a moment to refer to the relations which existed between Alīvirdī and the Europeans in Bengal. On the whole, his conduct to them had been rather strict than

[1] Vol. I., pp. 1, 75; Vol. II., p. 57; Vol. III., p. 163.
[2] Stewart, 'History of Bengal, p. 426.
[3] Or 9th April. See Vol. I., pp. 118, 248.
[4] Orme MSS., O.V., 66, p. 96.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

unjust. During the wars with the Marathas he allowed the Europeans to strengthen their fortifications, and the British in particular to begin, in 1744, the great Ditch which protected the northern half of Calcutta. On the other hand, in 1744-1745, he exacted large sums of money—three *lakhs* and a half from the British alone[1]—on the plea of the expense to which he was put in these wars. He strongly objected to any exhibition of independence on their part, and any reference to the rights they enjoyed under the royal *Farmān*.

'He knew well how to say at the proper moment that he was both King and *Wazir*.'[2]

Though he had allowed them to fortify their Settlements against the Marathas, he had no intention of allowing them to acquire sufficient strength for purposes of resistance to himself, and to all requests for permission to increase their fortifications he replied:

'You are merchants, what need have you of a fortress? Being under my protection, you have no enemies to fear.'[3]

The reason of his jealousy was that he was well informed of what was happening in Southern India, of the interference of the English and French in the politics of the country, which had reduced the native Princes to the position of puppets, and, lastly, of the capture of Angria's stronghold at Gheria. He was determined that there should be no such interference with the affairs of his own province, and yet he had no wish to drive out of the country a class of people who did so much for trade and commerce, though their presence filled his mind with a premonition of coming evil. This is shown by two speeches ascribed to him.

'He used to compare the Europeans to a hive of bees, of whose honey you might reap the benefit, but that if you disturbed their hive they would sting you to death.'[4]

On another occasion, when his General, Mustafā Khān, supported by his nephew, Sayyid Ahmad, represented the ease with which the Europeans might be deprived of their immense wealth, he exclaimed:

[1] Vol. III., p. 289.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 161.
[4] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 52.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

'My child, Mustapha Khan is a soldier, and wishes us to be constantly in need of his service, but how come you to join in his request? What have the English done against me that I should use them ill? It is now difficult to extinguish fire on land; but should the sea be in flames, who can put them out? Never listen to such advice as his, for the result would probably be fatal.'[1]

These warnings were prophetic, and, in conformity with his secret dread, Alīvirdī was extremely cautious in his treatment of the Europeans,

'always observing this policy not to demand it' (*i.e.*, money) 'of them all at the same time, as he wisely judged their union only could make them formidable.'[2]

At the same time he was capable of very vigorous action, and
1749. when in 1749 Commodore Griffin seized the goods of an Armenian merchant, and the latter appealed to him for redress, he placed guards upon the British Factories, and stopped their trade for several months until they were forced to submit to his terms.[3]

In one way or another there was continual friction, the British asserting that there had never been a period of three years during which they had not been forced to submit to extortions of various kinds, and always complaining that they were not allowed the full enjoyment of the privileges granted by the *Farmān* of Farrukhsiyar in 1717, though Bengal

'by its investments has been hitherto, notwithstanding all the interruptions of the Nabobs, the most beneficial part of the Company's estate.'[4]

On the other hand, the Nawab maintained that the British not only enjoyed all privileges consistent with the welfare of the Province, but greatly abused these privileges, to the detriment of the Government and the native traders.

'The injustice to the Moors consists in that, being by their courtesy permitted to live here as merchants, to protect and judge what natives were their servants, and to trade custom free, we under that pretence protected all the Nabob's subjects that claimed our protection, though they were neither our servants nor our merchants, and gave our *dustucks* or passes to numbers of natives to trade custom free, to the great prejudice of the Nabob's revenue; nay, more, we

[1] Stewart, p. 491, and 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 163.
[2] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 46.
[3] Vol. III., p. 289. [4] Vol. I., p. 199.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

levied large duties upon goods brought into our districts from the very people that permitted us to trade custom free, and by numbers of their impositions (framed to raise the Company's revenue), some of which were ruinous to ourselves, such as taxes on marriages, provisions, transferring land property, etc., caused eternal clamour and complaints against us at Court.'[1]

It is evident that all the materials for a quarrel were ready long before the accession of Sirāj-uddaula. It may even be said that the British, fretting at the petty restrictions to which they were subjected, were not unwilling to see it break out. Orme writes:

'The Nabob coming down with all His Excellency's cannon to Hughley, and with an intent to bully all the Settlements out of a large sum of money; Clive, 'twould be a good deed to swinge the old dog. I don't speak at random when I say that the Company must think seriously of it, or 'twill not be worth their while to trade in Bengal.'[2]

This, then, was the condition of affairs between Alīvirdī and the British. The French and Dutch had not even the protection of the *Farmān*, which gave, as it were, a legal standpoint for the pretensions of the British. Their trading privileges were much inferior, but they suffered equally from the extortions of the native rulers. The Dutch had made it their settled policy to limit themselves entirely to trade; they were in no position to defend themselves, and their ultimate resort was a threat to leave the country. The French were not in a much better position, but the Chiefs of their Settlements were able men, and well liked by the natives, and their achievements in Southern India gave them a certain appearance, if not the reality, of strength.

Such was the critical moment in which Alīvirdī Khān died, leaving the fortunes of his family in the hands of two young men, of whom their own relative writes:

'It having been decreed by Providence that the guilty race of Aly Verdy Khan should be deprived of an Empire that had cost so much toil in rearing, of course it was in its designs that the three provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa should be found to have for masters two young men equally proud, equally incapable, and equally cruel, Seradj-ed-doulah and Shaocat-djung.'[3]

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[1] Vol. III., p. 384.

[2] Letter from Orme to Clive, 25 August, 1752, Orme MSS., O.V., 19, pp. 1, 2.

[3] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 189.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER II.

THE EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS IN BENGAL.

'Bengal is a kingdom in Asia, very rich, on the gulf of the same name, traversed by the Ganges. . . . The French, English, and Dutch have had Settlements in it for many years.'—*Revolutions in Bengal.*[1]

In 1756 the chief European Settlements in Bengal were those of the English, French, and Dutch, that of the Danes at Serampore being new and of little importance, whilst the Prussian Company had no Settlement, their business being transacted by an Agent, whose headquarters were at the Octagon to the south of the French territory. The Portuguese traded simply as natives at their ancient Settlement of Bandel, to the north of Hugli. At Hugli itself there was a Fort, and the Governor or *Faujdār* was the native official with whom the Europeans had the closest relations.

The three chief Settlements consisted each of a native or Black Town, and a European or White Town. In the centre of the latter was the Factory or Trading House, which was surrounded by a quadrangular enclosure, the walls of which were constructed to carry guns. At each corner was a bastion to flank the walls or curtains. These feeble buildings were dignified by the name of forts. The Towns outside the Factories had practically no fortifications, though at Chandernagore there were the remains of an old ditch, which had once marked the bounds of the Settlement, and the northern part of Calcutta was protected by what was called the Maratha Ditch, dug by the native inhabitants of the town in 1743-1744 as a protection against possible Maratha raids. The original intention was to carry this completely round the Town from Chitpur or Bagh Bazar on the north, where there was a small redoubt, to Surman's Gardens on the south, so as to form with the river Ganges a kind of island easily defensible against

1743-1744.

[1] Vol. III., p. 215.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

irregular forces. But the Maratha scare had speedily died away, and not only had the Ditch been only half completed, but no care had been taken to keep clear the portion that had been finished, so that it was partially choked with mud, and was fordable at almost any point in its course. Accordingly, not only were the Settlements around the Factories exposed to any assailant, but the forts themselves were so closely surrounded by European houses built to a greater height, and often with walls as strong, if not stronger, than those of the forts themselves, that the latter were also incapable of defence. The European houses were handsome buildings, large and lofty, with wide covered verandahs, and standing in large gardens or compounds, so that to the native eye they were suited rather for the palaces of nobles than for the dwellings of mere merchants. Besides these fine town houses, the leading inhabitants were accustomed to recreate themselves not only in the beautiful gardens belonging to the various East India Companies, but also in gardens of their own, which they established some little distance away in the country.[1] In fact, the Europeans lived with an ostentation of wealth and comfort which completely dazzled the eyes of the natives, who, accustomed under a despotic Government to conceal all signs of wealth, could not imagine that this show of riches was not evidence of the possession of further hoards. Like London to Blücher, so Calcutta, Chandernagore, and Chinsura appeared to the native soldiery only as magnificent towns to plunder.

Besides their three chief Settlements, the English, French, and Dutch had Factory houses at Cossimbazar, near the capital town of Murshidabad; at Dacca, the ancient capital of Bengal; at Balasore, the capital of Orissa; and at Jagdea or Luckipore,[2] at the mouth of the Ganges. At Patna also, the capital of Bahar, the three nations had had Factories, but the English had recently abandoned theirs. None of these were fortified except the English Factory at Cossimbazar;[3] the rest were mere country houses

[1] *e.g.*, Mr. Holwell and Mr. Pearkes had gardens on the banks of the Ganges in the part of Calcutta now known as Garden Reach (Vol. II., pp. 73, 76), and Mr. Kelsall to the north of Calcutta in Chitpur (Vol. III., p. 294).

[2] These towns are at some distance from each other, but apparently were managed in each case by a single staff.

[3] Fortified in 1742-1743 (see Orme MSS., India, vol. iv., p. 4137) for a defence against the Marathas.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

standing in walled enclosures, which are called in India "compounds." Thus the Council of Dacca writes:

'The Factory is little better than a common house, surrounded with a thin brick wall, one half of it not above nine foot high.'[1]

The garrisons of the British up-country Factories in no case exceeded fifty Europeans; the French Factories had even smaller numbers,[2] and the Dutch seem to have employed chiefly native *barkandāzes* or gunmen.[3]

It is evident, therefore, that the up-country Factories were entirely at the mercy of the local Government, and in all quarrels between the natives and Europeans it was the custom of Government to surround these Factories and stop their trade until the Europeans submitted to pay the fine, which was the inevitable result of any show of independence on their part.[4]

Before 1756 there had been no serious conflicts between the natives and Europeans, except the destruction of the Portuguese Settlement at Hugli in 1632,[5] the expulsion of the British from Hugli in 1685, and the expulsion of the Emdeners from their little Fort at Bankibazar in 1733-1734.[6] The three Forts which now guarded their Settlements had never been attacked, and were reputed absolutely safe against assault by a native army. We may therefore examine a little more closely into what is known about them, always bearing in mind that each of the three nations was under the delusion that the forts of the other two were in good repair, and strongly held by European garrisons of from three hundred to a thousand men.

Of Fort Gustavus the Dutch Council writes on the 22nd January, 1757:

'We have on the 16th instant sent in a written protest against the action of the Vice-Admiral, and must now patiently await what is further in store for us, as, not being able to offer any resistance worth mentioning, for our palisades, that have to serve as a kind of rampart, are as little proof against a cannonade as the canvass of a tent, and our entire military force consists of 78 men, about one-third of whom are in the hospital, all the seamen being below and the other military on the Patna expedition, whilst all our native servants have run away from fear of the English, so that if matters came to such a pass

[1] Vol. I., p. 35.
[2] Vol. III., p 418.
[3] Vol. I., p. 14.
[4] Vol. III., p. 219.
[5] Stewart, p. 241.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 314.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

we should have to man and aim the guns ourselves—in short, to perform and do all the work for which assistance is required.'[1]

And, again, on the 2nd April:

'Our fort . . . would not be able to withstand the onslaught of the enemy for as many hours as the French have days.'[2]

In the whole of Bengal the Civil Establishment of the Dutch was only thirty-five officials. They had also four military officers and a surgeon.[3]

At the same time, the Dutch had very great trading interests in the country. They claimed the premier rank amongst the Europeans at the *Darbār* or Court of Murshidabad, and they had the expensive but honourable privilege of laying down the buoys in the River Hugli.[4] These were the Dutch claims and their means of enforcing respect for them. Accordingly, one is not surprised to find that neither the Dutch nor any other European nation possessed the right of having a European representative at Court, and that when their native agent or *Wakīl* pressed their claims too strongly, Sirāj-uddaula dared on occasion threaten not only him but his masters with a flogging for their insolence.[5]

Turning next to the French, the statement of the French Factories in Bengal on the 23rd January, 1756,[6] shows that the European garrison of Chandernagore consisted, including officers, of 112 men. If we deduct the native clerks from the Establishment of 642, we find that the total force which can be assumed capable of bearing arms was 376 Europeans and Portuguese. With this garrison, if one may dignify the defenders by that name, the French had to defend a Fort which Mr. Renault, the Governor, describes as follows:

'Fort d'Orléans, situated almost in the middle' (of the Settlement), 'and surrounded by houses which command it, was a square of 100 fathoms, built of bricks, flanked by four bastions of 16 guns, without outworks, ramparts, or glacis. The south curtain, which was about 4 feet thick, raised only to the *cordon*, was provided only with a platform for three guns; but the rest of this curtain, as well as that of the north, was only a wall of earth and brick, a foot

[1] Vol. II., p. 82.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 315.
[3] Vol. III., p. 410.
[4] Vol. II., pp. 257, 287.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 315.
[6] Vol. III., p. 418.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and a half thick and eighteen feet high; and warehouses lined the east curtain which faces the Ganges, and which we were still working at. All this side had no ditch, and that which surrounded the other sides was dry, about four feet deep, and, properly speaking, nothing but a ravine. The fortifications of the Fort up to the *cordon* were eighteen feet high, and the houses which commanded it from the edge of the counterscarp within musket range had a height of 30 feet.'[1]

This is Renault's description of Fort d'Orléans when he had spent several months in trying to make it as defensible as possible.

Whilst the natives of the country were under the impression that the French were the masters of inexhaustible wealth, Renault could not obtain money for the Company's annual trade investment, much less for unproductive expenditure, such as that for fortifications. The French East India Company was in debt to native merchants at Chandernagore to the extent of 26 or 27 *lakhs*, of which 7 *lakhs* were due to the Seths alone.[2] It was only the personal credit of Renault which enabled him to obtain cargoes for the French East India ships, and when the *Saint Contest* brought him 300,000 rupees, the whole sum was swallowed up by the fine which the Nawab imposed upon the French in 1756 as a punishment for not assisting him in his attack on Calcutta.[3]

So great was the poverty of the French, and so great their indebtedness to the rich merchants, Jagat Seth and Coja Wājid, that when they came to quarrel with the English their chief hope of assistance from the native Government lay in the belief that their native creditors would not willingly see them ruined. On the other hand, they had a great resource in the personal character of their Chiefs. M. Renault's credit with the native merchants has just been referred to. M. Courtin, the Chief of Dacca, seems to have been on exceedingly good terms with the Nawab's Deputy, Dasarath Khān, and M. Jean Law at Saidabad (Cossimbazar) was almost a favourite of Sirāj-uddaula, to whom he made a practice of paying court at a time when other Europeans treated him with neglect, if not with actual disrespect.[4]

Lastly, we come to the British at Calcutta, of which town Orme writes:

'The river Ganges forms a crescent between two points, the one called Perring's Garden, the other Surman's Garden. The distance between these,

[1] Vol. III., p. 267. [2] Vol. II., p. 438. [3] Vol. III., p. 253. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

measuring along the bank of the river, is about three miles and a half. In the deepest part of this crescent, about the middle between the two points, is situated Fort William, a building which many an old house in this country exceeds in its defences. It is situated a few paces from the riverside, on the banks of which runs a Line of guns the whole length of the Fort from north to south, and this is the only formidable part, as it is capable of annoying ships in the river. The ends of this Line are joined to the two bastions of the Fort nearest the river by a garden wall and a gate in each, which would resist one shot of a six-pounder, but which would be forced by the second. Opposite to the two bastions mentioned are two others inland to the eastward, but within thirty yards to the north and forty yards to the south the bastions are commanded by large houses. To the eastward inland the top of the Church[1] commands the whole of both the northern and eastern ramparts. Northward and southward for the length of a mile, and to the eastward about a quarter of a mile, stand all the English houses, mostly separated from each other by large enclosures. Where the English habitations end to the northward commence those of the principal black merchants, which reach quite up to Perring's Garden. To the southward down to Surman's Garden the houses, belonging to a lower class of the natives, are less conspicuous. Twelve years ago a ditch had been dug, beginning at Perring's, and carried inland of the town in a crescent, with an intent to end at Surman's, but only four miles of it are finished.'[2]

Orme omits to mention that in the eastern curtain of the Fort several large openings had been broken for the purpose of obtaining light and air, and that between the two southern bastions a huge warehouse had been erected, preventing the flanking fire of these bastions, and with walls too weak to carry guns. In the southern curtain doors had been cut leading into the new warehouse, and thus the whole eastern and southern faces of the Fort were rendered practically defenceless against a determined attack.[3]

As regards the garrison of Fort William, this ought to have consisted of four companies of foot and a company of artillery, in all 500 men; but the latest return we have, which is dated 29th February, 1756,[4] shows the number of European officers and soldiers to have been only 260. As the garrison was supposed to supply the up-country Factories, and to provide convoys for treasure sent up-country, there ought to have been over 200 more Euro-

[1] Captain Fenwick, who was absent in England at the time of the siege, wrote to Mr. Orme that the roof of the Church not only commanded the whole of the Fort, but all the adjacent houses. He advised that it should be fortified (Orme MSS., India, vol. vi., pp. 1569-1589).

[2] Vol. III., p. 126.

[3] Vol. II., p. 25, and Vol. III., p. 387.

[4] Vol. III., p. 408.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

peans available; but the mortality amongst the European soldiery was very great, and the constant fighting with the French in Madras had caused the authorities at Fort St. George[1] to detain all the European recruits sent for Bengal since 1752.[2] Consequently we find that when the military force at Calcutta came to be reviewed just before the siege it was found to number only 180 foot, of whom not above 45 were Europeans, and 35 European artillery. With the addition of militia and volunteers the fighting force in Fort William was 515 men,[3] a smaller number than the garrison of Fort d'Orléans when it was besieged in March, 1757.

Not only were the British exceedingly weak from a military point of view, but they had the misfortune of being commanded by the most incompetent of leaders. The chief military officer, Captain-Commandant George Minchin, may be most briefly dismissed in Holwell's scathing words:

'Touching the military capacity of our Commandant, I am a stranger. I can only say we are unhappy in his keeping it to himself, if he had any; as neither I, nor I believe anyone else, was witness to any part of his conduct that spoke or bore the appearance of his being the commanding military officer in the garrison.'[4]

And Holwell justly remarks:

'Troops . . . are hardly ever known to do their duty, unless where they have an opinion of as well as love for their commanders.'[5]

In a garrison made up largely of civilians this would not have been of much importance if the Governor had been a man of character and ability, but unfortunately Mr. Roger Drake, who had held that position by seniority since 1752, though he had never been formally confirmed by the Court of Directors, was a man totally unfitted to meet a critical emergency. He was only thirty-four years of age. His uncertain official position weakened his authority with both natives and Europeans in Calcutta, and his unfortunate domestic arrangements exposed him to many indignities, and drove him for company to men of inferior position.[6] Consequently much of the influence which should have belonged

[1] Madras. [2] Vol. I., p. 134. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[4] Vol. II., p. 26. [5] *Ibid.* [6] Vol. I., pp. 276, 277.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

to the Governor of Calcutta was in the hands of subordinate members of Council. The chief of these were Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, whose sole object seems to have been their own enrichment without any regard to the interests of the Company or the rights of the native Government,[1] and Mr. John Zephaniah Holwell,[2] an ex-surgeon, who was now *Zamīndār* or native Magistrate of Calcutta. Mr. Holwell appears to have been the only member of Council who had any real knowledge of the natives of the country, and his reforms in the administration of the law in Calcutta had endeared him to them, though they had rendered him unpopular with many of the Europeans whose gains were interfered with. To these, perhaps, should be added Mr. Watts, the Second in Council, who was Chief at Cossimbazar, and who should have been well acquainted with the attitude of the native Government, but at this time he seems to have had very little idea of the danger in which the Europeans stood, and his carelessness is in some degree responsible for the misfortunes which befell Calcutta.

These, then, were the position and the resources of the Europeans in Bengal at the accession of Sirāj-uddaula. It remains only to say a few words about two personages who were the intermediaries between them and the native Government—namely, Coja Wājid the Armenian, and Omichand the Jain merchant. The former, who was known amongst the natives by the title of *Fakhr-uttujjār*, or the 'Chief of Merchants,' was a very rich trader, who lived at Hugli in a house close to the Muhammadan Fort.[3] He had dealings with the French and Dutch, and was employed by the Nawab in his negotiations with the Chiefs of these nations. At first, at any rate, he was inclined to favour the French in their quarrels with the British; but he was an extremely timid man, and after his property at Hugli had been plundered by the British,[4] he gradually changed sides, and it was by his means that the British were informed of the Nawab's intrigues with the French Chiefs Law and Bussy.[5] At this time he was not unsuspected of inciting Sirāj-uddaula against the British.[6]

[1] Vol. I., p. 269.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 85, 93, 266.
[3] Vol. III., p. 36.
[4] Vol. II., p. 125.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 313, 314, 355, 364, 365, 369, 370.
[6] Vol. I., p. 140.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Omichand was an inhabitant of Calcutta. Babu Sāradā Charan Mitra[1] tells us his proper name was Amīr Chand, that he was a Panjabi by race and a Sikh by religion. He had a brother, Golāb Chand, and a nephew, Dayāl Chand, and a near relative—some say a brother-in-law[2]—Hazārī Mal, in Calcutta. Apparently he started business in Calcutta as an agent of Vaishnava Dās Seth and his brother, Mānik Chand Seth, of Barabazar. Omichand, though he lived in Calcutta, was a great favourite with Alīvirdī Khān, whose protection he secured by judicious presents of rare or curious objects—*e.g.*, on one occasion a Persian cat.[3] Drake asserts that he was offered the Nawabship of Purneah in 1754, and shortly before the attack on Calcutta he received a *parwāna* granting him the same privileges as Jagat Seth.[4] On the other hand, he had for many years acted as the Agent of the English in regard to the annual investment or purchase of Indian goods in Bengal, and this office had been recently taken from him. Mr. Noble, in his letter to the Council of Fort St. George,[5] says plainly that he had been very badly treated by some of the gentlemen in Bengal,

'who have generally sacrificed the Company's welfare and nation's honour and glory to their private piques and interest.'

However, whether he had been treated justly or unjustly, he was considered to be a man of very vindictive temper—

'You know Omychund can never forgive'[6]—

and when he was injured in both pride and pocket by being no longer

'the acting person between the Company and the Government,'[7]

the suggestion that he instigated the Nawab[8] to attack Calcutta, so that he might prove his importance to the British by stepping

[1] 'Sahityasamhita,' vol. i., No. 1, pp. 9-15.

[2] Vol. I., p. 142.

[3] Vol. II., p. 63.

[4] Vol. I., p. 141. This is important to notice, as it marks the beginning of the rivalry between Omichand and the Seths, which we shall have to notice later on.

[5] Vol. III., p. 328.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

[7] Vol. II., p. 148.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

in as their saviour at the last moment, met with ready credence. Whether he intended to ruin or save the British can never be known, as Drake put him in prison as soon as the Nawab approached Calcutta, and thereby so enraged him that he not only refused to write a letter to the Nawab in favour of the British, but even sent his servants to inform the Nawab of the easiest way to introduce his forces into the town.[1]

[1] Vol. III., p. 363.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER III.

THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE NAWAB AND THE BRITISH.

'One of those State mysteries that die with their authors.'—SCRAFTON.[1]

[illegible] Decem-, 1755.

NAWĀZISH MUHAMMAD KHĀN died in December, 1755. As has been said already, he was extremely rich, and had no heir; but his property was in the hands of his widow, Ghasīta Begam, the eldest daughter of Alīvirdī, and his *nāib* or *dīwān*, Rāj Ballabh,[2] who was probably a native of Dacca, and had had the management of the fleet of boats stationed at that town to hold in check the pirates of the Sundarbans before Nawāzish Muhammad made him his *dīwān*.[3] Rāj Ballabh was now at Murshidabad, and as, owing to the last illness of Alivirdī, Sirāj-uddaula was in practical possession of the government, Sirāj-uddaula called upon him for an account of his uncle's affairs, so as to ascertain how far his estate was indebted to Government for the revenues of Dacca. Failing to give a satisfactory account, Rāj Ballabh was imprisoned, or at any rate placed under strict surveillance,[4] until Sirāj-uddaula should be in a position to force him to compliance. What happened next is not quite clear. Two explanations, however, suggest themselves. One is that Rāj Ballabh, to get out of the difficulty and yet save his property, proposed to Sirāj-uddaula to trick the English into sheltering his son, Krishna Dās, and then to seize upon their property as punishment for the offence.[5] This seems to be corroborated by the fact that he was very quickly released, and that after the capture of Calcutta his son, Krishna Dās, was complimented with a dress of honour. The other explanation is that

[1] 'Reflections,' p. 52. [2] 'A Bengali of Jehangirnagar.' Seir Mutaqherin, II. 253. [3] 'Seir Mutaqherin.' [4] Vol. III., p. 353. [5] Vol. I., p. 279.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Rāj Ballabh was set free at Amīna Begam's request[1] simply because Sirāj-uddaula was busy with other absorbing matters, and, being enraged at the way he had been treated, declared himself a partisan of Ghasīta Begam and her protégé, Murād-uddaula.[2] Whilst *dīwān* of Nawāzish Muhammad at Dacca, Rāj Ballabh had had a great deal to do with the British. He had been useful to them and might be so again, and now he instructed Krishna Dās to travel down by boat with his women and valuables to the shrine of Jagannath in Orissa. As the wife of Krishna Dās was expecting her confinement Rāj Ballabh obtained from Mr. Watts,[3] the English Chief at Cossimbazar, a letter recommending his son's admission to Calcutta until his wife was able to proceed on her journey. This letter was given by Mr. Watts to Rāj Ballabh without consulting any of his Council.[4] Krishna Dās arrived at Calcutta on the 13th March,[5] and presenting his credentials to Mr. Manningham, who was acting for the Governor during his absence[6] on a short health trip to Balasore, he was admitted into the town, and took up his abode in a house belonging to Omichand.[7] This, of course, could not happen without the Nawab's spies reporting the fact to him, and it naturally excited his suspicions as to the motives of the British in sheltering the family of a man reputed to be under his displeasure. His feelings towards the British were by no means friendly. They had never asked his assistance in their affairs at Court,[8] and he considered they had treated him with discourtesy when he wished to visit their Factories or houses,[9] and had sworn to have revenge for this slight.[10] His spies now reported that they were plotting with Ghasīta Begam and Shaukat Jang, Nawab of Purneah, though Mr. Surgeon Forth asserts that this rumour was entirely based upon visits paid by a certain Corporal Bailey to doctor the horses of Aga Baba, a son of the Nawab Sarfarāz Khān, who was living at Murshidabad under Ghasīta Begam's protection.[11]

13th M 1756.

At this time both French and English were expecting the

[1] Vol. II., p. 3.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Vol. I., 120.
[4] Vol. I., p. 163.
[5] Or 16 March. Vol. I., p. 120, and Vol. II., p. 4.
[6] From 9th to 21st March. Vol. I., p. 120, and Vol. II., p. 136.
[7] Vol. I., p. 120.
[8] Vol. III., p. 162.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] Vol. II., p. 62.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

outbreak of war in Europe, and feeling certain that there would be disturbances in Murshidabad on Alīvirdī's death, which would so weaken the hands of Government that if either nation found itself strong enough to attack the other it need have no hesitation in breaking the neutrality which their fear of Alīvirdī had hitherto caused the Europeans to observe towards each other in Bengal, they began without any concealment to repair and strengthen their fortifications.[1] To excuse their action, however, they accused each other of preparing to resist the Government, and the French asserted[2] that the British were expecting the arrival of a strong military force for this purpose. Misled by the French and the reports of his spies, Sirāj-uddaula, a short time before his grandfather's death, charged the British in *Darbār* with this intention. Mr. Forth and the British Agent were repeatedly questioned by Alīvirdī, and convinced him that the report was false, but Sirāj-uddaula was not satisfied.[3] However, for the moment Alīvirdī's illness was too serious to allow consideration for other matters, and to add to his difficulties Sirāj-uddaula now heard that the *Wazīr*[4] of the Emperor was about to invade Bengal to enforce the payment of the tribute which Aliverdi had in the year 1750 promised to the Emperor, but which he had never remitted to Delhi. He contented himself therefore with ordering his spies—especially the chief of his Intelligence Department, Rājārām, *Nāib* of Midnapore—to keep a watch on the doings of the British in Calcutta. Mr. Watts heard of these orders, and was also informed that there was a good deal of talk amongst the military party of the great wealth of Calcutta and the ease with which the Nawab might make himself master of it.[5] He did not attach much importance to such reports, still he mentioned them in his letter to Mr. Drake, and advised him to dismiss Krishna Dās as soon as possible.[6] Drake accordingly gave orders that a careful watch should be kept upon the town, all spies arrested, and, later on, that all letters should be brought to him for examination;[7] but in spite of the recommendation of Mr. Watts,

[1] Vol. I., pp. 124, 214. [2] Vol. II., p. 7. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 66.

[4] Some accounts say it was the *Wazīr*, Ghāzī-uddīn, others Shujā-uddaula, son of Mansūr Alī Khān, Nawab of Oudh. Vol. I., p. 174.

[5] Vol. I., p. 127. [6] Vol. II., p. 6, and Vol. III., p. 332.

[7] Vol. I., p. 128, and Vol. II., p. 6.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

which was supported by Messrs. Manningham and Holwell, he did not dismiss Krishna Dās.[1] This foolish conduct afterwards gave rise to the unfounded suspicion that some of the most influential people in Calcutta had received bribes to protect the latter.[2]

Meanwhile the old Nawab Alīvirdī died, and almost before he was buried[3] Sirāj-uddaula assumed the reins of government. His first step was to secure himself against his aunt, Ghasīta Begam, who had retired with her wealth to her palace of Moti Jhil. This building, which was almost entirely surrounded by water, was strong enough for defence, and Ghasīta Begam had with her her lover, Nazīr Alī, and a number of troops; but by the persuasion of her mother, the widow of Alīvirdī, she surrendered without any resistance, on condition that her wealth should be untouched and her lover's life assured. Nazīr Alī was immediately banished, Ghasīta Begam ordered to retire to the Harem, and her wealth carried into the Nawab's Treasury.[4] This happened about ten days after Alīvīrdī's death,[5] and immediately all opposition to the Nawab was at an end. Sirāj-uddaula had still, however, to settle with the Begam's supposed allies, the Nawab of Purneah, Shaukat Jang, and the English. He had also the always present dread of an attack from the side of Oudh. The latter was the less difficult to deal with, as the *Wazīr* hardly dared to advance towards Bengal for fear lest his own dominions should be invaded.[6] Accordingly it was easy to buy him off with a generous bribe from Ghasīta Begam's fortune,[7] in return for which he swore friendship with Sirāj-uddaula.

10th April, 1756.

Sirāj-uddaula now considered himself strong enough to reorganize his Court. He dismissed his grandfather's officers, appointed Mohan Lāl (his household *Dīwān*) head *Dīwān* or Prime Minister, and Mīr Madan, whom Stewart describes as a person of mean origin, but who was a brave and capable officer, he made General of the Household Troops.[8] Mīr Jafar, whose support had placed him on the throne, apparently retained the emoluments of

[1] Vol. II., p. 5.
[2] Vol. I., pp. 207, 279, and Vol. III., p. 368.
[3] Vol. I., p. 304.
[4] Vol. III., pp. 217, 218.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 394.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 218.
[7] Vol. I., p. 175, and Vol. III., p. 218.
[8] Stewart, p. 498. The 'Seir Mutaqherin,' II., 186, says he was made *Bakhshi*, but this is evidently a mistranslation.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the post of *Bakhshī*, or Paymaster of the Army, and Rāi Durlabh, the other *Dīwān*, also held a high military command. The army, which had been levied before the death of Alīvirdī to resist the *Wazīr* and Shujā-uddaula, was next ordered to march towards Purneah, Shaukat Jang having not yet recognised Sirāj-uddaula's accession. On the 16th of May[1] Sirāj-uddaula set out from Murshidabad, but before doing so, in order to let the Europeans know that he was not oblivious of what he was pleased to call their misdoings, he sent word to the French and English to pull down all the fortifications they had erected since the beginning of his predecessor's illness.[2]

16th May, 1756.

This message appears to have been the Nawab's first official intimation to the Europeans of his accession, and though it is said that he was displeased with the British for not sending him a complimentary present on that occasion,[3] it seems that they, whilst waiting for a formal announcement before doing so, actually did write him a complimentary letter,[4] which was well received—

'Presently, after the death of the old Nabob, President Drake wrote Sèrajah Dowlah a letter of congratulation on his accession, and desired his favour and protection to the English Company, which was received very kindly, and promises given our *vackeel* that he would show the English greater marks of friendship and esteem than his grandfather had done'[5]—

and a little later they sent him a small present, which he refused to accept.[6] Neither the Dutch nor the French made him such a present, for we find that after the capture of Calcutta, the amount of this *nazarānah* or complimentary present was included in the sums which he extorted from them as the price of permission to retain their fortifications.[7] The French, ably advised by M. Jean Law, their Chief at Cossimbazar, treated the Nawab's messenger with great courtesy, and as they had either completed all that they wished to do, or were able to persuade the messenger to report that they had done nothing improper, the Nawab, who received their reply at Rajmahal about the 20th May, was pleased to express his approbation of their conduct.[8]

20th May, 1756.

It was by no means the same case with the British. It has been mentioned that the Nawab had ordered his head

[1] Vol. I., p. 6. [2] Vol. III., p. 165. [3] Vol. I., p. 278.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 120. [5] Vol. III., p. 290. [6] Vol. I., p. 4.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 55. [8] Vol. II., p. 8, and Vol. III., p. 165.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

spy, Rājārām, to keep watch upon their doings in Calcutta. Rājārām sent to that town his own brother, Narāyan Dās, with a *parwāna* or letter, of the contents of which we know nothing for certain, but which is said to have been addressed to Mr. Drake, and to have contained a demand from the Nawab for the surrender of Krishna Dās, his family, and his wealth. When he reached Hugli Narāyan Dās appears to have heard that spies found in Calcutta had been arrested and punished, so on the 14th or 15th April[1] he entered the town secretly—in disguise according to Omichand—and went to Omichand's house. That the bearer of a royal letter should go to Omichand's house was natural enough, Omichand being the leading native merchant in Calcutta, a *persona grata* at Court, and, I believe, also connected by marriage with Rājārām; but that he should enter Calcutta secretly and in disguise was quite unnecessary, whatever orders might have been issued for the treatment of spies. Mr. Drake was absent for the evening at Baraset;[2] so Omichand took him to Messrs. Holwell and Pearkes, telling them what the Nawab's letter contained, and asking them to receive it. They very properly refused, and early next morning they reported the matter to Mr. Drake before the meeting of Council. Whilst Messrs. Drake, Manningham, and Holwell were discussing the matter, word was brought that Omichand and Narāyan Dās were present at the Factory and waiting for admission. Omichand was at this time very much in Mr. Drake's disfavour, and the latter hurriedly came to the conclusion that it was a trick of Omichand—Krishna Dās living in one of his houses —to get Krishna Dās' property into his own hands.[3] Accordingly, as Mr. Drake had authority to exclude undesirable persons, it was decided to refuse to receive Narāyan Dās' letter, and to expel him from the town, and servants were sent to see this order immediately carried out.[4] Extraordinary, however, as had been the behaviour of Narāyan Dās, supposing he had really come from the Nawab, there was a chance that his official position and his relationship to Rājārām might enable him to do the British a bad turn at Court. This, which ought to have been thought of earlier, only occurred to their minds after Narāyan Dās had left Calcutta, and all that could then be done was to send word to

[1] Vol. I., p. 120, and Vol. II., pp. 6, 137. See also Vol. III., pp. 393, 394.
[2] Vol. II., p. 6. [3] Vol. I., p. 121. [4] *Ibid.*, and Vol. II., p. 7.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Mr. Watts at Cossimbazar. Mr. Watts promptly explained matters to his friends at Court, and to all appearance the matter passed off smoothly. Drake tells us that he also informed Mr. Watts that if the Nawab insisted he would surrender Krishna Dās, but not his women.[1] Encouraged by his apparent success in managing the Nawab's messengers, Mr. Drake took upon himself the responsibility of replying alone to the envoy who brought the order to demolish the fortifications, though his was a public message, openly delivered, and to be dealt with only by Council.

10th-12th May, 1756. It arrived about the 10th-12th May,[2] and Drake sent the Nawab a reply, which has been lost, and the contents of which were known to no one at Calcutta save himself, and possibly Mr. Cooke, Secretary to the Council. At any rate, Mr. Cooke asserted that the reply then sent was not the same as that which Mr. Drake asserted he had sent when the matter came before Council two or three days later.[3] No other copies of this letter are known to exist, and we are therefore at a loss to explain why the Nawab took so much exception to Mr. Drake's reply. According to Mr. Drake, it was to the effect that the British had traded in Bengal for over a century, and had always been obedient to the Nawabs; that they hoped the Nawab would not listen to the false assertions of their enemies as to their building new fortifications; and that, owing to the

20th May, 1756. probability of war breaking out between Britain and France, they were repairing the old fortifications upon the riverside. This letter was received by the Nawab at Rajmahal on the same day as the reply from the French, and threw him into a violent fit of passion. He leapt from his seat, crying out:

'Who shall dare to think of commencing hostilities in my country, or presume to imagine I have not power to protect them?'[4]

Even supposing the Nawab to have been touched in his vanity at the mere supposition that he was less able to maintain order than his predecessor, this letter seems hardly of a nature to justify such violent conduct as immediately followed. We must suppose, therefore, that either the letter actually sent contained a different message or that something else had occurred to enrage the Nawab, and it is certain that matters had not gone at Rajmahal in a way to please him. In the first place, when he arrived at Rajmahal

[1] Vol. II., p. 138.
[2] Vol. III., p. 394.
[3] Vol. II., p. 147, and Vol. III., p. 394.
[4] Vol. II., p. 15; Vol. III., p. 165.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

his army was discontented, as the soldiers believed they would have to fight against the Royal troops, whom they heard had been sent to assist Shaukat Jang,[1] and his generals represented that the Rains would soon begin, and that therefore it was not wise to commence a campaign in Purneah, where the roads would become impassable in the course of a few weeks. Whilst he was hesitating what to do, he received a message from Shaukat Jang acknowledging him as his Nawab and master, but excusing himself from paying him a visit owing to the difficulty of travelling at that season of the year. It is said that the envoys from Shaukat Jang obtained the acceptance of this qualified submission by betraying to the Nawab their correspondence[2]—there is no evidence of there having been any correspondence—with the British. It is quite possible, however, that to divert the Nawab's anger they pretended that the British had been the instigators of Shaukat Jang's resistance. At the same time Narāyan Dās, whose expulsion by Mr. Drake had been hitherto forgotten, obtained an opportunity of making a complaint of ill-treatment,[3] and the Nawab was speedily convinced that not only had Mr. Drake sent him an impertinent written answer, but that he had verbally insulted him, and also ill-treated his messengers.[4] According to M. Law his first resolve was to expel all the Europeans or *Feringhees* from the country,[5] but if it was so it soon changed into a settled purpose of chastising the British alone. Shaukat Jang was forgotten, and orders issued for an immediate return to Murshidabad and the attack of the British Fort at Cossimbazar.[6]

The above is a bare account drawn from existing documents of the series of events which preceded the war, but as so much dis-

[1] Vol. I., p. 124, and Vol. II., p. 163.

[2] Vol. III., p. 164. Possibly the assertion that the British had corresponded with Shaukat Jang was simply a part of the general plot to bring the Nawab into conflict with that nation of foreigners which seemed most likely to be able to oppose him successfully.

[3] Vol. II., p. 161, and Vol. III., p. 332.

[4] Vol. I., pp. 95, 116, 230; Vol. II., p. 144; Vol. III., p. 165. M. Vernet, the Dutch Chief at Cossimbazar, says the Nawab 'received some intelligence concerning the conduct of the English at Calcutta which was not published here' (Vol. I., p. 6).

[5] Vol. III., p. 165. M. Vernet wrote that the Nawab had promised if he captured Calcutta to expel all Europeans from the country (Vol. I., p. 11).

[6] In the 'Seir Mutaqherin' it is stated that the Nawab did not hear of the protection given to Krishna Dās until he arrived at Rajmahal; but the author of that book, Ghulām Husain Khān, was not at Murshidabad at this time, and it is quite certain that Sirāj-uddaula knew of it a long time previously.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

cussion arose afterwards it may be as well to say something more about the 'causes of the war'; and for the purpose of clearness we may distinguish between (1) the general causes, (2) the reasons or motives of the Nawab, and (3) the pretexts alleged by the Nawab.

1. The general causes have already been referred to. They were the discontent of the Hindus towards the Muhammadan Government, and what I may perhaps best describe as that incompatibility of temper between Europeans and Orientals which seems to prevent them from living together in peace on anything like terms of equality. I have already mentioned that the Hindus were quietly looking round for a possible deliverer, and also that the Europeans had for some years interfered in native politics in other parts of India, at first merely to secure their commercial position, though later on perhaps with ideas of conquest. Alīvirdī had noticed this, and Mr. Forth writes:

'If the reports[1] are to be credited, it was the advise of the old Nabob to his son to reduce the power of the three nations, but more particularly ours; for what with our conquests on the Coast,[2] and the libertys granted us in Bengal by our *phurmaund*, he was so apprehensive that at last we should demand after his death all those branches of trade cut off from us by him and former Nabobs, which our *phurmaund* gave us a right to, and, if not granted, might involve his son in troubles by bringing our forces into the country, and the consequence might be a conquest of it to the ruin of his family, and that he thought a timely severity would prevent it. Some will have it that his advise to his son was to turn the English entirely out of his country, but trace the character of this man from the earliest accounts we have of him, we shall find that he was too wise, too good a politician—his whole conduct shows it—ever to advise his grandson to such measures as to hurt his country and lessen his revenues by so false and imprudent a step, well knowing the advantage of trade, especially that part carried on by the English, superior to all the Europeans joined together.'[3]

M. Law[4] would have it that the suspicions of Alīvirdī were directed as much against the French as against the British, but Alīvirdī was shrewd enough to know that, whatever had happened in Southern India, in Bengal it was the British and not the French who were dangerous to him, since their power was based on a firm commercial footing and the grants made by the Emperor, which they could enforce in exact proportion with the weakness of the local Government. It was this consideration also and no other

[1] Vol. I., p. 211. [2] Madras. [3] Vol. II., p. 66. [4] Vol. III., p. 161.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

which attracted the Hindus towards the British. Alīvirdī therefore saw that if their power could be lessened, the French or any other nation might be reckoned with at leisure.

Thus amongst the general causes of hostility between the native Government and the Europeans there were particular reasons why this hostility should find its first object in the British.

2. As to the particular reasons which animated Sirāj-uddaula against the British, the most important were his vanity and his avarice.[1] I have mentioned how he had considered himself insulted by the behaviour of the British when he wished to visit one of their Factories. This supposed insult, it is clear, was aggravated by popular rumour, for M. Law[2] describes his exclusion from the British Factories and country houses as habitual. On the other hand, as Mr. Forth says, the British trade exceeded that of all the other nations; Calcutta was the largest and handsomest of the European Settlements; the ostentatious mode of living indulged in by the British caused the rumours of their wealth to be exaggerated, and they had never, previous to his accession, made Sirāj-uddaula any presents as the French had done.

3. Lastly, we come to the pretexts put forward by the Nawab for attacking the British. These he states himself in his letters to Coja Wājid and to Mr. Pigot, Governor of Madras. They are:[3]

(*a*) That the British had made fortifications contrary to the established laws of the country.

(*b*) That they had abused the privileges of trade granted them by their *Farmān*.

(*c*) That they had protected his subjects when he had demanded their surrender to give account of their employments.

The last of these pretexts he emphasizes strongly in his letter to Mr. Pigot,[4] in which also he shows a strong personal animosity against Mr. Drake.

'It was not my intention to remove the mercantile business of the Company belonging to you from out of the *subah*[5] of Bengal, but Roger Drake, your *gomasta*,[6] was a very wicked and unruly man, and began to give protection to

[1] M. Renault says: 'He took hold of the first pretext to satisfy his hatred for the English and his cupidity, without any regard to the difference which this conduct might make in his revenues' (Vol. I., p. 209).

[2] Vol. III., p. 162. [3] Vol. I., p. 4. Vol. I., p. 196.

[5] Province. [6] Factor.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

persons who had accounts with the *Patcha*[1] in his *Koatey*.[2] Notwithstanding all my admonitions, yet he did not desist from his shameless actions.'

At the same time he declared[3]

'unless the English consent to fill up their Ditch, raze their fortifications, and trade upon the same terms they did in the time of Nabob Jaffeir Cawn,[4] I will not hear anything in their behalf, and will expel them totally out of my country.'

In other words, though he made no direct demand for money,[5] he insisted that the British should give up all the privileges granted them by the Emperor's *Farmān* of the year 1717, and revert to the position of the Armenians and Portuguese, whose trade was at the mercy not only of the Nawabs of the different provinces, but of every petty local official. This declaration brings into prominence that incompatibility of temper between European and Oriental which I have spoken of, the European claiming the protection of the law for the individual against the Sovereign, the Oriental insisting that the sole law should be the Sovereign's will. The quarrel was evidently one that could be settled only by force.

A word, however, must be said about the Nawab's pretexts for war. As regards the fortifications, it is quite clear that the British had exceeded their rights, for Colonel Scot in 1754 had planned a small fort or redoubt at Perrin's Garden in the extreme north of the Black Town of Calcutta, and this had been built before or during Alīvirdī's illness. The British had also begun to clear out the Maratha Ditch, and to repair the fortifications close to Fort William as soon as they heard of the probability of war between France and England,[6] and this they had done without asking permission from anyone. A certain Mr. Kelsall had also repaired an

[1] Emperor. [2] Factory. [3] Vol. I., p. 3.

[4] Nawab Murshid Kulī Khān.

[5] Up to the very last moment the British expected that the Nawab would conclude the affair by a demand for money (Vol. I., pp. 4, 48, 58, 61, 103, 126, 134). Rāi Durlabh actually demanded 20 *lakhs* from Messrs. Watts and Collet when they were his prisoners (Vol. I., p. 103).

[6] Both Mr. Drake and Mr. Holwell (Vol. I., p. 124, and Vol. II., p. 8, note) refer to the repairs of the fortifications as commencing after the receipt of the packet by the *Delaware*, conveying the Court's orders to prepare for a war with France. As this packet arrived only late in May—it was despatched from Madras on the 11th of May—and shortly before the attack on Cossimbazar, it is clear that they had forgotten the repairs begun in March, or earlier, during Alīvirdī's last illness.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Octagon or summer-house to the north of the Maratha Ditch, which the Nawab's spies had taken to be a fort, as Government was accustomed to test shot there.

As regards the abuse of trade privileges, it must be confessed that the British had used the *dastaks* or passes for goods free of custom in a way never contemplated by the *Farmān*. These had been intended merely for the goods of the Company, which were allowed to pass through the country free of custom in return for a payment of 3,000 rupees *per annum;* but the British had issued them to cover not only the private trade of their own servants, but the trade of native merchants whom they favoured. Mr. Drake asserts that he had greatly lessened this malpractice, but it still existed.[1]

The protection given to the servants of the native Government is somewhat difficult to understand. The only case on record is that of Krishna Dās,[2] the circumstances of which have been detailed above. On the one hand the British had no right to shelter the servants of Government from the authorities in their own country; on the other hand, whilst the accession of Sirāj-uddaula was doubtful, they might be justified in running some risk in the case of a man to whom kindness might be a useful speculation.

It will be seen, therefore, that Sirāj-uddaula had a show of reason in all the pretexts he alleged for his attack on the British; but where he displayed his folly was in resorting to such violent means for reducing to submission a useful people whom his grandfather had always been able to manage by much milder measures, and in publicly exhibiting his own contempt for law and order by claiming the right to abrogate the *Farmān* granted by his own master, the Emperor of Delhi.[3]

Seeing his mad behaviour, the people of the country were delighted, and thought he was marching straight to ruin.

'They hugged themselves in the expectation that the English would defeat the Nabob and deliver them from his tyranny and oppression.'[4]

[1] Vol. II., p. 148.

[2] At the time of the siege of Calcutta the natives of Bengal generally asserted that the protection of Krishna Dās was the sole cause of the war (Vol. III., p. 339).

[3] Letter from Council, Fort St. George, Vol. I., p. 199; Letter from Mr. Pigot to the Nawab, Vol. I., p. 241; and Admiral Watson's Letter, Vol. II., p. 70.

[4] Vol. III., p. 78.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER IV.

THE TREACHEROUS SEIZURE OF COSSIMBAZAR FORT.

'Look now at those Englishmen, who were once so proud that they did not wish to receive me in their houses.'—SIRAJ-UDDAULA.[1]

HAVING determined to 'extirpate' the British from Bengal, Sirāj-uddaula, with the promptitude of his grandfather, sent orders to his officers at Murshidabad to surround the Factory at Cossimbazar, and to Kāsim Alī Khān[2] to march down and occupy the Fort of Muckwa Tanna below Calcutta and on the opposite side of the Hugli, so as to cut off their retreat, and prevent reinforcements coming up the river.[3] Rajmahal was about three days'[4] journey from Cossimbazar, and it was not until the 24th May[5] that the Chief, Mr. Watts, was made acquainted with the Nawab's wrath by the sudden appearance of a body of troops under Mirzā Omar Beg, who had been despatched by Rāi Durlabh to invest the Factory. Omar Beg had so far no idea of the reasons for the orders he had received, and as the French and Dutch Factories had also been surrounded, the general supposition was that the Nawab simply intended to extort money from all the Europeans. Accordingly, he had no object in treating the British severely, and allowed Mr. Watts to take in stores and provisions,[6] for which act of courtesy the French tell us[7] Mr. Watts made him a suitable present. The next day, however, the guards were withdrawn from the other Factories and increased upon the British. Mr. Watts accordingly wrote in haste to Calcutta for orders and a reinforcement.[8] In subsequent letters Mr. Watts informed the Council that the guard upon the Factory had been

24th May, 1756.

[1] Vol. III., p. 162. [2] Vol. I., p. 1. [3] *Ibid.* [4] Vol. II., p. 8.
[5] Vol. I., p. 1. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 127. [7] Vol. III., p. 220. [8] Vol. I., pp. 1-3.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

WILLIAM WATTS.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

increased and the investment had been made more close, and that it was supposed that this attack was entirely due to the malice of Hakīm Beg,[1] one of the Nawab's revenue officers, who had had frequent quarrels with the British in connection with the collection of customs. Mr. Watts therefore advised that submissive letters should be written to the Nawab regarding the fortifications, and that counter charges should be brought against Hakīm Beg. Council immediately drew up the letters suggested, and forwarded them to Mr. Watts for the Nawab; but the messengers were either frightened or unable to enter the Fort, and so the letters were never delivered. In reference to the question of reinforcement, a Council of the military officers was called. Captain Alexander Grant, who had recently come down from Cossimbazar, reported that the Fort was, in his opinion, sufficiently garrisoned and provided with artillery and ammunition for defence,[2] and the officers agreed that Mr. Watts might easily hold out until the Rains, when soldiers could be sent up by boat, but that it would be impossible to despatch the small force which they had at their disposal by land, and further, that as they had so few troops at Calcutta it would be dangerous to weaken their own garrison. A letter was accordingly written to Mr. Watts to do the best he could for himself,[3] but this, like all the others, did not reach him.[4]

Mr. Watts meanwhile was in a most difficult position. He was in a fort[5] commanded on all sides by houses in which the enemy might obtain cover; his guns were old; of a garrison of fifty men less than half were Europeans, and these mostly undisciplined runaways from Dutch ships, the remainder being half-castes or lascars. A prolonged defence was therefore out of the question, and as the servant of a trading Company he knew well that a resort to force could, in the eyes of his masters, be justified only by success. This was impossible, and resistance meant a declaration of war against the Nawab and the certainty that all responsibility for the quarrel would be thrown upon his shoulders. Mr. Watts was not a very young man—he was thirty-eight years old[6]—

[1] Mr. Tooke (Vol. I., p. 250) says the demand for the surrender of Krishna Dās was despatched by Hakīm Beg at the Nawab's order.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 73, 74.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 127, and Vol. II., p. 11.

[4] Vol. III., pp. 292, 334.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 329.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 411.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and he had been nearly twenty years in the country, so that he had seen many quarrels with the native authorities, all of which had been settled by money; and he had no reason, not knowing the causes of the Nawab's anger or understanding his real character, to think that this occasion differed from previous ones. Besides, he had his wife with him. She was near her confinement, and in a state of panic at the idea of the Fort being attacked.[1] Consequently, when a chance of compromise offered itself he thought that he could, without exposing himself to any imputation of cowardice, seize upon it to extricate himself from his difficulty. In the meantime he gave strict orders to prevent the Nawab's forces from entering the Fort.

1st June, 1756. On the 1st June[2] Sirāj-uddaula reached Murshidabad, and ordered Rāi Durlabh, who had taken command, to seize the Fort immediately. Rāi Durlabh presented himself at the gate and attempted to force his way in, but found himself confronted by the guard with fixed bayonets and the gunners standing to their guns with matches lighted.[3] He retired precipitately, and determined to resort to treachery. Accordingly he wrote to Mr. Watts asking him to come out, and assuring him of safety. Thereupon Mr. Watts sent his surgeon, Mr. Forth, who was well acquainted with the native language, to him, and Rāi Durlabh not only declared that no injury was intended to Mr. Watts, but sent back with him Mīr Husain Alī, son of Hakīm Beg,[4] carrying a *betel*—the native pledge of safe conduct—which he asserted had been sent from the Nawab himself.[5] Mr. Watts now consulted Messrs. Collet and Batson, the other members of the Council of Cossimbazar, and it was decided that he ought to visit the Nawab. Lieutenant Elliot, who commanded the garrison, appears to have opposed this decision;[6] but his opinion was overruled, as there was nothing unusual in the Chief of a Factory paying a complimentary visit to the Nawab when in its neighbourhood.[7] Mrs. Watts' entreaties seem

[1] Vol. I., p. 6, and Vol. III., p. 222.
[2] Stewart, p. 499.
[3] Vol. I., pp. 175, 250.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 46.
[6] Vol. I., p. 252. Mr. Watts says Lieutenant Elliot did not oppose his going to the Nawab's camp (Vol. III., p. 334).
[7] When the Nawab came to Hugli after the capture of Calcutta, Mr. Bisdom actually paid him such a visit (Vol. I., p. 55).

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

also to have had some influence in overcoming the opposition of the military.[1] Accordingly, on the 2nd June Mr. Watts, accompanied by Mr. Forth and a couple of servants, went to make his visit to the Nawab. They were received politely by Rāi Durlabh, but when they approached the Nawab's tent their hands were tied behind their backs, and they were led as prisoners into Sirāj-uddaula's presence.[2] Mr. Watts, speechless with rage and mortification, could say nothing, and the Nawab, after looking at him for a time in silence, ordered him to be detained as a prisoner. He was placed in charge of Hakīm Beg and his son, Mīr Husain Alī.[3] On the 3rd June he was informed that the Nawab was enraged with the British for building a drawbridge at Perrin's Garden and repairing Mr. Kelsall's Octagon, of which I have already spoken. He was required to sign a *muchalka* or engagement that the Council of Calcutta would demolish the new fortifications, would give no protection to servants of the Government, and would recoup the Nawab for any loss which his revenues might have suffered from the abuse of the *dastaks* or trade passes. He explained that he could not sign any such document without his Council, and Mr. Forth was accordingly instructed to go and fetch Messrs. Collet and Batson. Mr. Watts bade him tell them that they were not to come to the Nawab's camp on any condition, but whether Mr. Forth did not deliver this message,[4] or those gentlemen thought it better to disregard it, they went to the camp, and there stated that they had no authority to sign any agreement which would be binding on the Council of Calcutta. They were immediately imprisoned, and nothing more was said about the *muchalka*. The same evening Mr. Collet was sent back to the Fort with orders to deliver up the guns and ammunition. He accordingly went there, and instructed Lieutenant Elliot to make them over to Rāi Durlabh's officers. On the 5th Mr. Collet was ordered to return to camp and Mr. Batson was sent back, and the same day the Nawab's army started for Calcutta, taking Messrs. Watts and Collet along with them. Mr. Forth was advised by his native friends to escape, and went to the Dutch Factory, where he was kindly received.[5]

2nd June, 1756.

3rd June, 1756.

5th June, 1756.

[1] Vol. I., p. 322. [2] Vol. III., p. 166. [3] Vol. I., p. 5.
[4] Vol. III., p. 334. [5] Vol. I., p. 11, and Vol. II., p. 61.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

As soon as the British had given up their arms, the native soldiers began plundering the buildings in the Fort, until by the Nawab's orders the Company's warehouses were closed and sealed.[1] They treated the gentlemen and soldiers with much rudeness and brutality,

'threatening the gentlemen to cut off their ears, slit their noses, and *chabuck*[2] them,'[3]

but, according to the Muhammadan custom, respected the privacy of Mrs. Watts' apartments, to which she and her children had retired.

The ill-treatment of the prisoners continued until the 8th, when Lieutenant Elliot, rather than submit to the insults of the soldiery, shot himself dead with a pistol which he had secreted about his person.[4] This compelled the native officers to interfere, for they did not know what account the Nawab might demand of them if any of the civilians who had been left in their charge were driven to similar acts of desperation.[5] They accordingly imprisoned Messrs. Batson, Sykes, Chambers, and Hugh Watts in their own rooms; but the two former escaped the same night, and were sheltered in the other European Factories, where Messrs. Hastings and Marriott, who had been absent at some of the *aurangs*,[6] also found refuge after being plundered of all they possessed. On the 9th Messrs. Watts and Chambers were sent to the public prisons along with the soldiery, and though the latter were released the next day, these unfortunate gentlemen were detained until the 24th, when the French and Dutch Chiefs obtained their liberty by pledging themselves for their appearance when required by the Nawab. Mrs. Watts and her children were allowed to retire unmolested to the French Factory,[7] where M. Law treated them with the utmost kindness until they could be safely sent down the river.

9th June, 1756.

24th June, 1756.

Mrs. Watts is a celebrated character in the history of Calcutta. She accompanied her husband to England on his retirement, and when he died she returned to Calcutta, and having married a

[1] Vol. I., p. 46.
[2] To whip.
[3] Vol. I., p. 253.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[5] Vol. III., p. 335.
[6] Weaving establishments.
[7] Vol. I., p. 176.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

MRS. WILLIAM WATTS
(THE BIGAM JOHNSON)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

clergyman of the name of Johnson, whom she sent to England with an allowance, was for many years the acknowledged leader of society under the half-Indian appellation of the Begam Johnson. She was extremely wealthy, and Colonel Sleeman[1] tells us that her house was the resort of all the gentry from the Governor-General downwards. She used to tell her visitors that she had been saved from the Nawab's harem only by the intercession of his mother, Amīna Begam.[2]

The easy capture of the Fort had not been expected by either Europeans or natives,[3] or even by Sirāj-uddaula himself. The French, with the exception of M. Law, who wrote,

'Such was the surrender of this little fort, which many people pretend could have held out long enough to repulse the Nawab and force him to come to terms. I am the less inclined to believe this as I know the weaknesses of the place much better than its strength,'[4]

were loud in their outcries against Mr. Watts' behaviour, though Mr. Young, the Prussian Agent, says that after his arrival at Chandernagore on the 28th June,[5] he had little difficulty in satisfying his friends as to the propriety of his conduct.[6] 28th June, 1756.

Mr. Holwell asserts that a defence of Cossimbazar for only twenty-four hours would probably have enabled the Council to complete the defences of Calcutta, and the coming on of the Rains would have forced the Nawab to retire in confusion.[7] This is one of those hypothetical arguments which does not admit of answer, and is hardly worth discussion.[8] Mr. Watts, however, submitted a description of the Fort and garrison to Colonel Clive and his officers, who gravely certified, what everyone already knew, that the Fort was incapable of prolonged defence.[9] In fact, the question was not a military one at all, but a question as to whether the Company's interests required Mr. Watts to take upon himself the responsibility of a violent breach of relations

[1] 'Rambles of an Indian Official,' vol. ii., pp. 358, 359.

[2] Other accounts (Vol. I., p. 20) say that Amīna Begam tried to persuade Sirāj-uddaula not to go to war with the British, representing to him that it was beneath his dignity to make war upon mere merchants.

[3] Vol. I., p. 207, and Vol. III., p. 78.

[4] Vol. III., p. 166.

[5] Vol. I., p. 48.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[7] Vol. II., p. 12.

[8] Vol. III., p. 335.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 329, 330.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

with the Nawab. If after-events proved that he decided wrongly it was a fault of which M. Law says:

'If he was the dupe of Sirāj-uddaula's bad faith, it must be acknowledged that he knew how to take his revenge.'[1]

Mr. Watts was no simpleton, and it was as much by his diplomacy at Murshidabad as by the victory of Clive at Plassey that Sirāj-uddaula was driven from his throne.

Sirāj-uddaula took nothing from the Fort except the guns and ammunition[2] which he needed for the attack of Calcutta, his own being worthless,[3] and on the 5th June he began his march.

5th June, 1756.

[1] Vol. III., p. 167. [2] Vol. I., pp. 73, 103. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER V.

THE EXPULSION OF THE BRITISH FROM CALCUTTA.

'As fatal and melancholly a catastrophe as ever the annals of any people, or colony of people, suffered since the days of Adam.'—HOLWELL.[1]

As he had been prompt in his attack on Cossimbazar, so Sirāj-uddaula wasted no time in his march upon Calcutta. In the hottest season of the year, in a country with no roads and with a cumbrous train of artillery drawn by elephants and oxen, his army covered a distance of about 160 miles in eleven days. At the same time that he displayed this promptitude he showed that he was doubtful of success by the eagerness with which he sought the aid of the French and Dutch, recklessly promising the town of Calcutta and the British Factories to both if only they would join him.[2] This was, of course, known to his soldiers, as was probably the fact that both French and Dutch had refused him their assistance.[3]

'His army marched unwillingly; his people murmured loudly against him, and said that he was taking them to be butchered, and that they could never capture the place. These just murmurs of the army came to the ears of the Nawab. He paid no attention to them. He even treated very cavalierly a person who spoke to him of them, saying, "I do not doubt that thou art afraid thyself. I am not astonished at it, for thou art a Bengali coward." As a matter of fact, this person was one of his dependent *rajas*.'[4]

The French were convinced that the Nawab himself was afraid when they found that Coja Wājid had been ordered to open negotiations with the British.[5]

[1] Vol. II., p. 38. Mr. Holwell of course alludes to the appellation commonly given by the Muhammadans to Bengal, viz., 'The Paradise of India.'

[2] Vol. I., pp. 5, 7, 15, and Vol. III., p. 167.

[3] *Ibid.* [4] Vol. I., p. 178. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Notwithstanding the absence of good roads, the Indian *kāsid*, or postal messenger, manages to travel with great rapidity, and letters from Cossimbazar sometimes arrived at Calcutta in as short a time as twenty-seven hours.[1] Accordingly Mr. Watts' letter of the 2nd June, saying that the Nawab had arrived at Cossim-
3rd June, 1756. bazar, reached Calcutta next day. It convinced the Council that the Nawab meant war, and that submission was useless.[2] They thought, however; it would be wise to try what influence Coja Wājid could bring to bear, and so they sent him copies of the letters which they had transmitted to Mr. Watts for the Nawab. Coja Wājid unfortunately had left Murshidabad for Hugli, and though he received these letters was unable at first to deliver them. He was in fact too frightened to do so, the Nawab having threatened with punishment anyone who might dare to plead on behalf of the British. This fury of rage seems, however, to have already moderated to some extent, as in his letter to Coja Wājid of the 1st June the Nawab wrote that he would not drive the British out of the country if they would submit to his conditions.[3] This encouraged Coja Wājid to approach him again, and his agent, Siva Bābū, took Drake the copy of a letter which Coja Wājid advised him to write to the Nawab. Drake complied, and Coja Wājid presented the letter to the Nawab when he arrived at Kelsall's Garden on the 15th or 16th June; but by this time hostilities had commenced with the British attack upon Tanna Fort, and the Nawab did not vouchsafe any reply.[4]

3rd June, 1756. On the 3rd June the Council sent warning to Dacca and the other up-country Factories to collect the Company's goods, and be prepared to flee if the danger increased.

The next day they wrote to the Council of Fort St. George (Mądras), saying they were engaged in a quarrel with the native Government, and that,

'should they be attacked, they are resolved to repel force by force.'[5]

From the 3rd to the 6th June no news arrived at Calcutta. So absolute was the lack of trustworthy intelligence that it was not even known whether the Nawab was with his army or not.[6]

[1] Vol. I., p. 126. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 117. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 97. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The first news of the capture of Cossimbazar came as a rumour from Chandernagore on the evening of the 6th June.[1] It was confirmed the next morning by the arrival of Mr. Collet's letter of the 4th June. 6th June, 1756.

Before this, about the 20th May, when he received Mr. Watts' letter mentioning the talk in Murshidabad about the ease with which Calcutta might be captured,[2] Mr. Drake gave orders to Captain Minchin to raise as many soldiers as he could, and to Mr. Holwell to enlist *buxerries* or native matchlockmen, and to the *kāsids* or messengers to bring all letters received in or despatched from Calcutta to him for examination. The pay of the labourers on the fortifications was increased, a stock of provisions laid in, and, in fact, every preparation was made for a siege, except, apparently, the most essential of all—namely, a plan of defence. When the bad news arrived on the 7th a further request for assistance was sent to Madras, and letters were written to Messrs. Bisdom[3] and Renault,[4] the Dutch and French Chiefs, asking them to act in concert with the British against the Nawab. The Dutch, who were determined to maintain their rôle of mere merchants, absolutely refused to meddle in a quarrel not of their own making;[5] the French answered sympathetically, but all they could offer was the refuge of their own Fort if the British thought Fort William indefensible.[6] Both Chinsura and Chandernagore lay in the Nawab's path on his march to Calcutta; neither of them could spare a man or a gun, and it seems certain that the Nawab forcibly took the French boats for the passage of his men across the Ganges, though he refrained, as a matter of courtesy, from actually marching through their town.[7] The Nawab had likewise a body of European and half-caste artillerymen in his service, who were said to be deserters from the French, and were commanded by an ex-French officer, the Marquis de St. Jacques, and the spies employed by the British asserted that the French sent a quantity of powder to the Nawab's army when he was at Bankibazar.[8] This the French stoutly denied, but the accusation was believed 7th June, 1756.

[1] Vol. I., p. 128, and Vol. II., p. 11.
[2] Vol. I., p. 127.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 295.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[6] Vol. I., p. 295, and Vol. III., p. 293.
[7] Vol. I., p. 20, and Vol. III., p. 224.
[8] Vol. I., p. 143.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

by the British to be true, and bore bitter fruit later on. Meanwhile, the Council, though it had plenty of more important business to attend to, entered upon an angry correspondence with Mr. Bisdom as to his duty to assist them, and finally formally protested, in the name of the Company, against him and his Council for refusing to do so.[1]

On the 7th the British were informed that the Nawab had written to the neighbouring *Zamīndārs*[2] forbidding them to supply the British with provisions, and the same day, early in the morning, Drake called a council to consider the plan of defence. The military officers were summoned to attend, and the council resolved itself into a Council of War. Messrs. Simpson and O'Hara, and a French officer, Lieutenant Melchior Lebeaume, who was in the Company's service, were appointed to form a Committee.[3] The weakness of Fort William has been already mentioned, but the question under discussion was the larger one of the defence of Calcutta.

Two years before this time Colonel Scot[4] had drawn up a plan of defence for the Town, the main points of which were the completion of the Maratha Ditch, the building of redoubts at Perrin's and Surman's Gardens,[5] and the strengthening of the river front of the Fort. After his death the work was handed over to Lieutenant Wells,[6] who prepared the only detailed plan we possess of the Fort and its neighbourhood, and suggested various modifications. On his death Mr. Bartholomew Plaisted was entrusted with this duty, but he was dismissed the Company's service in 1755, and Messrs. O'Hara, a civilian, and Simpson, a subaltern in the military, were appointed engineers. Under their superintendence the redoubt at Perrin's was completed, and something done towards the repair of the Line of guns on the river front of the Fort; but so slowly was the work carried on that Captain Jasper Leigh Jones of the Artillery Company on the 4th August, 1755, submitted a letter to Council calling attention to the defenceless condition of the Town.

[1] Vol. I., p. 18.
[2] Collectors of the Nawab's revenues. Often hereditary.
[3] Vol. I., p. 128.
[4] Died 1754.
[5] The northern and southern limits of the British Settlement.
[6] Died 18 August, 1755 (General Letter to Court of 8th December, 1755, paragraph 108).

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The Council, which was composed of Messrs. Drake, Cruttenden, Manningham, Becher, Pearkes, Frankland, Collet, Macket, Eyre, and Holwell, voted his letter 'irregular, improper, and unnecessary' —in fact, they considered that the question of fortifications was not of any urgency, and might well wait for the Court of Directors' reply to Colonel Scot's indent for guns and military. Accordingly, the outermost line of defence suggested by Colonel Scot, not having been completed, could not be maintained, and the only question that remained was how much of the Town could be protected. What the Committee actually recommended is uncertain. Mr. O'Hara, in a letter dated the 17th February, 1757,[1] tells us that he advised that the Fort only should be defended, the European houses around it being pulled down to clear the way for the fire of the guns, but that Mr. Drake and the Council refused to allow the houses to be destroyed, partly on the ground of expense, partly because it would take a long time and more powder than they had to spare in the Fort. Captain Grant afterwards declared that Mr. O'Hara's suggestion was the proper one, but that

'so litle credit was then given, and even to the very last day, that the Nabob would venture to attack us, or offer to force our lines, that it occasioned a generall grumbling and discontent to leave any of the European houses without them. Nay, the generallity wanted to include every brick house in the place, Portuguese and Armenian, and thought it hard that any inhabitant should be deprived of protection against such an enemy. And should it be proposed by any person to demolish so many houses as would be necessary to make the fort defensible, his oppinion would have been thought pusilanimous and ridiculous, had there been sufficient time to execute such a work, as there was not, nor would it be possible to destroy half the number in triple the time, especially as we had not sufficient powder to blow them up.'[2]

The question was rendered still more difficult by the sudden discovery of the very small number of troops in garrison, the military officers reporting that 70 of the European soldiers were sick in hospital, 25 more were absent up-country, and that of the remaining 180 the greater part were only Portuguese. It was at last determined to occupy Perrin's redoubt with a small force, but to abandon the Black Town and draw an inner line round the European houses. Outposts were to be established at the three main entrances to the White Town, the lesser streets to be dug across and palisaded, all bridges to be broken down, and a trench

[1] Vol. II., p. 227. [2] Vol. I., p. 76.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

dug across the Park to the east of the Fort.[1] M. Jean Law says[2] that the British ought to have limited themselves to the defence of the Fort, but he ignores the considerations mentioned by Captain Grant.

The same day messages were sent to the Company's servants at Dacca, Jagdea, and Balasore to retire to Calcutta,[3] and orders issued to the inhabitants of Calcutta to send into the Fort all the arms and provisions in their possession,[4] whilst no less than five messages were sent viâ Vizagapatam to Madras for assistance.[5]

8th June, 1756. In the evening the militia were under arms, and on the morning of the 8th paraded 250 strong. Of these 100 were Europeans, largely drawn from the shipping, and so liable to be recalled on board; the rest were Portuguese and Armenians. A number of officers were appointed, and Messrs. Manningham and Frankland were made respectively Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel,[6] thus giving them rank superior to that held by any of the military. This extraordinary arrangement appears quite in keeping with the other ridiculous actions of the Council, and its only possible explanation is that the Council was so certain of repulsing the Nawab that its chief care was, under the pretence of not wishing to supersede senior military officers by their juniors, to make sure that none of the credit of the exploit should fall to the military.[7] It was soon found that the Portuguese and Armenians were extremely awkward in the use of arms, and so they were formed into two separate companies, the Europeans composing a third. This last was further weakened by thirty-four[8] of its members volunteering to serve in the military. They were young men, and behaved extremely well.

'Many Company's servants and young gentlemen in the Settlement entered as volunteers in the military, doing duty in every respect as common soldiers, and always expressing forwardness to be sent on command,[9] a spirit never sufficiently to be commended.'[10]

Amongst the military Lieutenant Smith was promoted to be Captain-Lieutenant, Captain Alexander Grant was made Adjutant General, Lieutenant Talbot Adjutant, and Mr. O'Hara Lieutenant

[1] Vol. II., p. 33. [2] Vol. III., p. 168. See also Vol. I., p. 178, and Vol. II., p. 30.
[3] Vol. I., pp. 69, 254.
[4] Letter from J. Cooke to Council, dated 18th February, 1757, appended to Public Proceedings of 19th February, 1757. [5] Vol. I., p. 133. [6] Vol. I., p. 130.
[7] For civilian jealousy of the military see Vol. I., p. c, note, Vol. II., p. 245, and Vol. III., p. 155. [8] Holwell says sixty-five (Vol. II., p. 28).
[9] *i.e.*, on particular duty. [10] Vol. I., p. 131.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of the Train or Artillery Company. These arrangements were to some extent due to the unsatisfactory character of the commanding officer, Captain Minchin. According to Captain Grant and Mr. Holwell, neither he nor Captain Clayton, the second in command, was fit for his post,[1] and Captain Witherington, who was in charge of the ammunition, was both incapable and insubordinate; but instead of superseding them by capable military officers, Messrs. Manningham and Frankland were given superior rank. Captain Grant as Adjutant did his utmost to obtain the usual returns of stores, but could obtain none till a much later and, as it proved, fatal moment, for

'such was the levity of the times that severe measures were not esteemed necessary.'[2]

On the evening of the 7th Coja Wājid's *dīwān*, Siva Bābū, brought to Calcutta the three letters[3] which the Nawab had written to his master. He informed the Council that it was Omichand who had instigated the Nawab to attack the British, and that Coja Wājid thought the Nawab would not be satisfied with a payment of money, and advised the British to prepare to resist him by force.[4] Siva Bābū was sent back to Coja Wājid with a submissive letter from Mr. Drake to the Nawab, as has been already mentioned.

On the 10th Siva Bābū returned to Calcutta with another letter from his master saying that he proposed to meet the Nawab at Krishnagar, but advising the British to continue their preparations for defence. The Council thought this letter implied that Coja Wājid expected to be able to accommodate matters, and approved his proposal, but they decided that it would be as well to assist his diplomacy by terrifying the enemy. Accordingly they sent a party of fifteen soldiers—volunteers—at night by boat to Sukhsagar, halfway to Hugli, with orders to make as much noise as possible. The country people were very much frightened, supposing that the British intended to attack Hugli, but the only solid result of this fantastical expedition was that 2,000 of the Nawab's cavalry hastened their march and occupied that town.[5] Meanwhile spies came in every moment, some reporting that the enemy were dispirited and

10th June, 1756.

[1] Vol. I., p. 77, and Vol. II., p. 26.
[2] Vol. I., p. 91.
[3] Vol. I., pp. 3-5.
[4] Vol. II., p. 145.
[5] Vol. I., p. 136.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

disinclined to advance, others that they were already exulting in the prospect of sacking Calcutta. All agreed that the neighbouring *Zamīndārs* had received orders to refuse provisions to the British.

11th June, 1756. Next day Mr. Drake reviewed his forces, and found he had at his disposal 180 soldiers (of whom only 45 were Europeans), 50 European volunteers, 60 European militia, 150 Armenian and Portuguese militia, 35 European artillerymen, 40 volunteers from the shipping—in all 515 men to defend a Fort of which Colonel Scot had written to Mr. Orme:

'It has been universally asserted by the gentlemen of the sword that 1,000 effective men is the least number necessary for the defence of the place, even as it is fortified, if we may be allowed the expression.'

These were now disposed as follows: 98 men under Captains Clayton and Holwell with three subalterns[1] at the Court House or Eastern Battery,[2] the same number under Captains Buchanan and Macket with three subalterns[3] at the Southern Battery, 68 men under Captain-Lieutenants Smith and Mapletoft with three subalterns[4] at the Northern Battery, and the remainder of the military and artillery with the Armenian and Portuguese militia under Captain Minchin, Lieutenant Bellamy, and the other subalterns in the Fort. Ensign Piccard with 25 men was ordered to occupy the Redoubt at Perrin's. Three ships, the *Prince George* (Captain Hague), the *Fortune* (Captain Campbell),[5] and the *Chance*[6] (Captain Champion), were sent up to cover the Redoubt, and 20 artillerymen and the volunteers, apparently under the command of Lieutenant Blagg, were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to support the point first attacked. Additional pay was offered to the *lascars* to work the guns, and the pay of the *coolies* employed on the fortifications was increased to induce them not to desert.[7]

One of the chief deficiencies in Calcutta was the want of guns and powder. The guns they had were old and neglected, and

[1] Apparently Lieutenants Bishop, Lebeaume, Wedderburn, and Douglas, and also Ensign Carstairs were at this post (Vol. I., pp. 147, 258, 259, and Vol. II., pp. 34, 35).

[2] See plan of 'The Environs of Fort William.'

[3] I can identify only Lieutenant Blagg and Ensign Scott.

[4] I can identify only Lieutenant Sumner and Ensign Walcot.

[5] Vol. I., p. 187.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 256. Drake (Vol. I., p. 135) names the ships as the *Dadley*, *Prince George*, and *Lively* grabb.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

very few of them mounted. Every carpenter who could be found was set to work, and as many guns as could be mounted on the shaky walls were got ready. Of powder they had more than had ever been in stock in previous years,[1] but most of it had become damp, and was useless, for powder could not be kept good through the rainy season. There was no time to make more, nor any place in the crowded Fort where the damp powder could be dried. From what was good, cartridges were prepared for the guns, the English women assisting in loading them.[2]

Though it was decided not to defend the Black or native Town, instructions were given to the native inhabitants to protect themselves as well as possible, and to obstruct the roads and passages. Many of them had lived for several generations under the British flag, and it was supposed that they would stand by the British; but the majority thought of nothing except how to secure their families by sending them out of the town. One or two, however, like Govind Rām Mitra, showed more public spirit, and did all they could to protect the quarters in which they lived.[3] This gentleman, on the capture of Calcutta, was imprisoned by the Nawab's Governor, Mānik Chand. In the month of December he managed to communicate with the British at Fulta, and sent them information regarding the distribution of the native troops. In reply the Council allowed him to enter the service of the Nawab so as to regain his liberty.[4]

A letter was received on the 12th June from Messrs. Watts and Collet, who were with the Nawab's army on the river opposite Hugli,[5] saying that if the Council would send a proper person to the Nawab's camp they thought the quarrel might yet be settled for a sum of money. They based this belief on the fact that the Nawab had not touched anything at Cossimbazar, except the guns and ammunition, whereas if he had intended to expel the British from Bengal he would have seized everything; but the probability is that the Nawab had simply left the Company's goods there until he had time to decide how he should dispose of them. This letter came through Mr. Bisdom, who was informed— 12th June, 1756.

[1] Vol. II., p. 151. [2] Vol. I., p. 139. [3] Vol. I., p. 140.
[4] Orme MSS., India V., pp. 1159, 1160. [5] Vol. I., pp. 103, 140.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

'that after the disgrace the Company had suffered at Cossimbuzar by the taking of their Factory and imprisoning of their servants, they were resolved not to come to any agreement.'[1]

Drake does not mention this reply, but says Mr. Watts' letter also contained a warning against Coja Wājid, whom Mr. Watts, even before the capture of Cossimbazar, had suspected of instigating the Nawab against the British.[2] The important point to notice is Mr. Bisdom's evidence that Mr. Drake and the Council were quite ready to fight. In fact, they thought that the mere appearance of resistance would frighten the Nawab, and the military were ordered to be on their guard so as to cut up any small raiding parties that might approach the Town.

The part of the Nawab's forces which the British considered most likely to be dangerous was the artillery—*i.e.*, the French and Portuguese, who were in charge of the Cossimbazar cannon. These men being all Christians, the Catholic priests in Calcutta were instructed to write and remonstrate with them on the wickedness of fighting for a Muhammadan Prince against Christians. They replied that they had now no means of escaping from the Nawab's service, but they proved of little use to him in the end.[3]

13th June, 1756. The approach of the Nawab's army rendered it probable that spies would try to enter the Town, and strict orders were issued on the 13th June to arrest all suspicious characters. A boat was seized this day, the people of which

'denied they had any letters for any person; but, after having received punishment, they confessed there were two letters hid in the boat directed to Omichund from Rogeram, the *Phousdar* of Midnapore and principal spy to the Nabob.'[4]

These letters did not appear to contain anything beyond a warning to Omichand to look after his own property, and a request to send Rājārām's property out of the city; but they were written in some strange, up-country dialect, which only Omichand's servants could understand, and Drake was therefore convinced there must be some treason in them; accordingly on his own authority he ordered Omichand to be imprisoned in the Fort. Omichand surrendered

[1] Vol. I., p. 104.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 140; Vol. II., p. 63; Vol. III., p. 73.
[3] Vol. I., p. 140.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 141, and Vol. II., p. 149.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

without making any resistance, but his brother-in-law, Hazārī Mal, ordered his servants to fire upon the soldiers sent to arrest him, and had his left hand cut off before he was captured.[1] Omichand's *Jamadār*,[2] when the soldiers forced the house, killed with his own hands thirteen women and three children, fired the house, and attempted, unsuccessfully, to commit suicide. Captain-Lieutenant Smith, who was in charge of the party, found the house full of weapons. As the inhabitants of Calcutta had been ordered to send all the arms in their possession into the Fort, this fact was taken as further proof of Omichand's guilt. About the same time Mr. Holwell being informed that Krishna Dās intended to escape from Calcutta, and it being important for the British to have him in their hands in case the Nawab should demand his surrender, he was also made prisoner on the 14th after a vigorous defence.[3] Mr. Tooke adduces this fact as a proof that Krishna Dās' visit to Calcutta was a device of the Nawab to involve the British, but it is quite possible that he really wanted to escape from the British when he feared they might be forced to surrender him to the Nawab.

Spies now reported that the Nawab's army, which consisted of from 30,000 to 50,000 men, with 150 elephants and camels, the cannon taken at Cossimbazar, and 25 European and 200 Portuguese gunners,[4] had arrived at Baraset, and that a small party had been seen at Dum Dum, and a letter was received from the French renegade, the Marquis de St. Jacques, who commanded the Nawab's Europeans, offering to mediate between the British and the Nawab. A reference to M. Renault at Chandernagore made it clear that St. Jacques was not to be trusted, and accordingly the Council confined their reply to an offer of reward if he would come over to the British with his men. Whether he received this letter or not is uncertain, but a spy declared that St. Jacques had been sent to the French and Dutch Factories to demand assistance in the name of the Nawab, and that the French had landed a quantity of powder for him at Bankibazar.[5]

At this critical moment Coja Wājid, upon whom the Council relied for mediation with the Nawab in spite of his suspected

[1] Vol. I., p. 142.
[2] Chief of the *peons*, or footmen.
[3] Vol. I., pp. 142, 258, 280.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 135, 264.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

collusion with Omichand,[1] on the pretence that he had heard that the British had seized and imprisoned his *dīwān*, Siva Bābū,[2] wrote them that they might send Omichand, or anyone else they pleased, to negotiate with the Nawab. This was supposed to be a device to have Omichand set free, so the Council replied that they had entrusted the negotiations to him alone, and still trusted to his endeavours on their behalf.

The Governor being extremely busy with many matters, Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, and Minchin were appointed Field Officers to visit the out-batteries in daily rotation, and Mr. Manningham was authorized by Council to relieve Mr. Drake of the charge of the Marine. To clear the Town as much as possible, the straw houses within the Lines of defence were set on fire. The fire spread and did much damage, and, terrified by this evidence of approaching war, many of the *coolies*, *lascars*, and servants fled from the Town, whilst the Armenians and Portuguese, with their women and children, crowded into the houses surrounding the Fort.[3]

13th-16th June, 1756.

For some time the more thoughtful members of the Council had been considering the wisdom of occupying Tanna[4] Fort as a possible place of retreat in case of necessity, and also to prevent the natives from blocking the river and cutting off the approach of reinforcements. This ought to have been done several days earlier, and though, when the ships *Dodaly*, *Prince George*, *Lively*, and *Neptune* reached the Fort, they were able to drive out the garrison,[5] they found they could not hold the place, and on the arrival of a large body of native troops on the 14th they were forced to evacuate it after throwing some of the guns into the river and burning the houses. The walls of the Fort were too strong to be easily destroyed, and on the 15th Captain Rannie, having been sent down with a further reinforcement of thirty men under Lieutenant Bishop, found that with the poor powder supplied him he could produce no impression. The ships were recalled on the 16th.[6]

[1] Vol. II., p. 64.
[2] Vol. I., p. 143.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 144.
[4] Vol. II., p. 30.
[5] One of the Nawab's first orders on the outbreak of the quarrel was for the occupation of this fort (Vol. I., p. 1).
[6] Vol. I., p. 256.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The only fruit of this expedition was the capture of two Moor ships, which were brought up to Calcutta.[1]

On the 15th the Nawab arrived at Chinsura, and the French and Dutch Agents were sent to present the compliments of their Chiefs. The Frenchman was received with great courtesy, the Dutchman with contempt and insult.[2] 15th June, 1756.

Next day all the British women were brought into the Fort. It was hoped that relief would arrive from Madras by the 20th August, and there were ample provisions of rice, wheat, and biscuit to last that time if the Nawab could not be forced to retire before. The reason for calling in the women was that a portion of the Nawab's troops, numbering 4,000 men, was making an attempt to force the Maratha Ditch by what is now known as the Chitpur Bridge, the approaches to which were covered by the guns of Perrin's Redoubt. 16th June, 1756.

The attack on this little fort began about noon, and Lieutenant Blagg, with a detachment of 50 men and two field-pieces, was sent to Ensign Piccard's assistance. The enemy were easily repulsed, but the British lost a few men on the ships as well as on shore. Amongst them was Mr. Ralph Thoresby, the first of the Company's servants to fall. Lieutenant Blagg was recalled in the evening, but Mr. Piccard made a sally in the night,[3] drove the enemy from their posts, and spiked four of their guns. They lost, it is said, 800 men.[4]

Notwithstanding this repulse of the regular attack, the Ditch being fordable all through its course,[5] the Nawab's troops and camp followers—7,000 plunderers followed him from Murshidabad[6] —began to flock into the town. The Nawab himself seems to have crossed by a bridge which he caused to be made at Cow Cross,[7] on the Dum Dum road, and took up his quarters in Omichand's garden. The spies sent by the British found his army, therefore, already partly in the Town and occupying the quarter called Similia. A few prisoners were made, who reported that the Nawab intended to make his great attack on Friday, the 18th, which was held to be a lucky day in the Muhammadan Calendar.[8]

[1] Vol. I., pp. 111, 136. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 21. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 187. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 79. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 171. [7] *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 164.
[8] The 18th June, 1756, corresponds to the 19th Ramazān, one of the fortunate days of that great Muhammadan fast.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Meanwhile he had to find some means of bringing his elephants and artillery across the Ditch, and so thought of renewing the attack on Perrin's; but during the night Jagannāth Singh, Omichand's *Jamadār*, who had somewhat recovered from his self-inflicted wounds, had himself placed on a horse, and with Omrao, another of Omichand's servants, brought a letter from their master to the Nawab, informing him that the Maratha Ditch did not encircle the whole Town, and that he could easily bring in his army by the Avenue which leads directly eastward from old Fort William to the Lakes.[1] The same night the British set fire to part of the Town in order to drive out the Nawab's men, but the lack of wind prevented much damage being done. On the other hand, the native plunderers pillaged the native Town, burning and murdering wherever they went.[2]

17th June, 1756. The 17th June was spent by the Nawab in bringing his army into the Town. The British destroyed all the native houses to the eastward and the southward, and the Nawab's plunderers set fire to the Great Bazar which lay to the north of the Fort, and the adjacent places and other parts of the Black Town,

'which burnt till morning, and, being so very extensive and near, formed a scene too horrible for language to describe.'[3]

The same night all the remaining *peons* and servants who could escape abandoned the British. Over 1,000 of the bearers or coolies deserted when they were required to carry powder into the Fort from the Magazine, which lay to the south.[4] At the same time the Portuguese and Armenian women and children crowded into the Fort, the militia declaring they would not fight unless their families were admitted.[5] About 500 were got safely on board ship, but enough remained—about 2,000—to throw everything into confusion.

18th June, 1756. The enemy were now (18th June) close to the Line of defence formed by the three outposts or batteries and the intervening European houses, and, immediate fighting being expected, orders were issued by Council to give no quarter, as the Fort prison was already crowded.[6] The attack opened

[1] Vol. I., p. 146; Vol. II., p. 22; Vol. III., p. 363.
[2] Vol. I., pp. 145, 257.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 258.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 165.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

against the Northern Battery, but this was only a feint, and Ensign Walcot, who was ordered to make a sally, easily drove off the enemy. The real attack was against the Eastern Battery. An advance post at the Jail was occupied by a small detachment under Lieutenant Lebeaume, who, after a time, was reinforced by Ensign Carstairs. The fighting at the Jail was very fierce, and about 3 o'clock Captain Clayton ordered Lebeaume and Carstairs, both of whom had been wounded, to retire on his battery. A glance at the plan will show that between the Eastern and Southern Battery the only defences were the European houses on the East and South of the Great and Little Tanks. All these had been occupied by small detachments, but it is evident that as soon as the enemy effected an entry at any one point, they were in a position to take the East and South Batteries in the rear.[1] They made their first entry at Mr. Nixon's house at the south-east corner of the Little Tank, and almost immediately all the European houses were occupied by crowds of musketeers, who could not be dislodged by the British guns owing to the strength of the *pucca*[2] walls. Captain Buchanan was now ordered to withdraw his men from the Southern Battery to the Reserve Battery between the Tank and the Company's house, and there seemed to be no great danger as long as the Eastern Battery could be maintained; but the parties in the European houses on the south of the Tank had some difficulty in making their retreat, especially one composed of ten young gentlemen[3] under Lieutenant Blagg in Captain Minchin's house. Finding themselves cut off, they retired fighting to the roof, where they defended themselves until their ammunition was exhausted, and then sallying forth forced their way with the bayonet across the Park until they reached the shelter of the Fort. Two of them, Messrs. Charles Smith and Wilkinson, were killed, and the rest all wounded, but they slew 173 of the enemy.[4] So far the

[1] The East battery was, however, covered by the wall of the Park.

[2] *i.e.*, masonry.

[3] Eight of them were Company's servants. Their names were Law, Ellis, Tooke, N. Drake, C. Smith, Wilkinson, Dodd, and Knapton. The other two, William Parker and Macpherson, were, I believe, seafaring men. Law, Drake, Dodd, Knapton, Parker, and Macpherson died in the Black Hole. Ellis lost his leg in the battle of the 5th February, and was killed in the troubles of 1763. Tooke was killed in 1757 in the attack on Chandernagore.

[4] Vol. I., p. 261.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

enemy had lost heavily, and it was even thought that the Nawab would give up the attempt in despair, and retreat in the night.[1] But Captain Clayton now considered it impossible to hold his battery any longer, and Mr. Holwell, his second in command, was sent to the Fort to ask for reinforcements or permission to retire. Knowing how fatal this step would be, the Adjutant, Captain Grant, persuaded Drake to promise reinforcements; but before Holwell and Grant could get back to that post Captain Clayton had abandoned it, leaving his guns behind him so carelessly spiked that the enemy were able to rebore and use them again the next day.[2] It was now necessary to recall Captain Buchanan from the Reserve Battery, and Captain-Lieutenant Smith from the North Battery, and to retreat upon the inner Line of defence—namely, the great houses which surrounded the Fort.

The same evening Ensign Piccard and his party at Perrin's were brought back to the Fort by boat, and the ships fell down the river below the Fort.

The position now was this: instead of having terrified the Nawab by the vigour of their resistance, the British had been beaten back in a few hours' fighting from a line which they had hoped to be able to defend for some days. The first thing then to be done was to secure the next line of defence—viz., the houses round the Fort, so Captain Clayton was ordered to occupy the Church, Lieutenant Bishop Mr. Eyre's house, Captain-Lieutenant Smith Mr. Cruttenden's, and Lieutenant Blagg the Company's house. Two experienced sea-captains were placed in charge of the guns of each bastion of the Fort.[3] The remaining *lascars* and *coolies* fled, and everyone who could pressed into the Fort.

Having provided for their immediate defence, a Council was called between 7 and 8 p.m.[4] to consider the state of affairs. Messrs. Manningham and Frankland had even during the day advised that the women should be sent on board. Council now accepted their offer to see them embarked, and ordered a detachment of thirty men to accompany them. It was not intended

[1] Vol. II., pp. 34, 154.

[2] These being heavy guns did the British more damage than any of the others (Vol. II., p. 32; see also Vol. I., pp. 82, 114, 149, 259).

[3] Vol. I., p. 151.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 150.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

that these gentlemen should go on board themselves, but apparently owing to the confusion and the impossibility of getting the guard together, they found it necessary to do so. Even then the crowding was so great that many of the ladies, including Mrs. Drake, Mrs. Mapletoft, Mrs. Coles, and Mrs. Wedderburn, were left behind. Some of these ladies were sent by Mr. Holwell on board the *Diligence*,[1] of which he was part owner, under the care of Lieutenant Lebeaume, who had been wounded in the fighting at the Jail; others were embarked by Mr. Baillie on the morning of the 19th.[2] Messrs. Manningham and Frankland were on board the *Dodalay* (of which they were also part owners), and remained there under pretence of waiting for the promised guard of thirty men—in fact, they actually caused the *Dodalay* to be moved a little way down the river clear of the other vessels.[3] Meanwhile on shore the Council broke up about 8.30 p.m., after ordering the Company's treasure and books to be taken on board; but the Sub-Treasurer and Company's *Banyan*, who had the Treasury keys, were not to be found, and no one seemed to consider it his special duty to see to the matter,[4] so both the treasure and the books were left where they were. The French heard from native reports that Drake had embarked on the ships not only the Company's treasure, but the goods placed by the European and native inhabitants of Calcutta for safe custody in the Fort, and upon this rumour built up a romantic plot on the part of Drake, Manningham, and Frankland to ruin Calcutta simply with the object of enriching themselves. This they refer to melodramatically as the 'Mystery of Iniquity,'[5] though they could not understand why, if Drake and his fellow conspirators had determined to carry off the wealth of Calcutta, they made no preparations to have any ships manned and ready for their escape.[6] With Manningham and Frankland there

[1] Vol. I., p. 245. [2] Vol. III., p. 297. [3] Vol. I., p. 167, and Vol. II., p. 44.

[4] Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, who were the Treasurers, were on board (Vol. II., p. 141). Whether any of the books were put on board is unknown. It is said some were, and that they were destroyed by Drake and his friends, who asserted they had been lost. Some were found in the Fort after its recapture (Vol. II., p. 340), but whether these were all the books that were not destroyed in the siege is uncertain. The General Journals and a few other books are still in the office of the Comptroller-General of Indian Treasuries at Calcutta.

[5] Vol. I., pp. 23, 38, 49, 179, 208. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

were on board a number of the militia officers—viz., Messrs. Mapletoft, Holmes, Wedderburn, Douglas, and Sumner[1]—who naturally took their orders from those two gentlemen. Captain Wedderburn and Mr. Holmes had been sent on board to ask them to return, but the only reply they could obtain was that they were waiting for the guard, with which message Captain Wedderburn[2] returned to the Fort.

The defenders of the Fort were now wearied out. The desertion of their servants left them without anyone to attend upon them, and there were no cooks left to prepare provisions, so that, though there was plenty of food, the men at the outposts were left to

'starve in the midst of plenty.'[3]

The fire from the houses on the south was so fierce that Lieutenant Blagg had to withdraw from the Company's house, and about 11 p.m. the Moors were heard under the walls. It was supposed they were preparing bamboo ladders to storm the Fort, but a few cannon shot put them to flight.

Two alarms were given in the course of the night; fortunately, they were false, for so tired out were the men that none of those off duty responded to the call to arms.[4]

19th June, 1756. Between 1 and 2 o'clock in the morning of the 19th June Mr. Drake and a number of other gentlemen held an informal Council.[5] Captain Witherington reported that the supply of ammunition had run short.[6] Other officers declared that the men were no longer under control, many of the militia were drunk, and some had even drawn their bayonets on the officers who called them to their duty. It was determined to abandon the Fort, but how or when to make the retreat could not be decided upon. Mr. Lindsay, who was lame,[7] was permitted to go on board, and was asked to order Messrs. Manningham and Frankland to come ashore with the other gentlemen; but as they saw no advantage in coming ashore simply to go on board again, they stayed where they were.[8] The Council was broken up suddenly by a

[1] Vol. II., p. 28.
[2] For Captain Wedderburn's subsequent career, see 'Bengal Obituary,' p. 70.
[3] Vol. I., p. 83. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 152. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 153.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 153. [7] *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 167. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 246.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

cannon-ball coming into the Consultation Room.[1] It had been held in no sort of privacy; everyone knew there was to be a retreat, and no one knew how it was to be carried out, for some wished it to be at once, and others the next evening.

Mr. Holwell now begged Omichand, who had been all the time a prisoner, to go to the Nawab and ask for terms; but, enraged at the treatment he had received, or else perfectly certain that the Nawab was implacable, he refused to give any assistance, and was left to nurse his wrath in prison.

It has been already said that Messrs. Manningham and Frankland had ordered the *Dodalay* to drop down the river. This was because the cannon shot and fire-arrows passing over the Fort seemed likely to damage the ships, which were already crowded with women and children. Manningham and Frankland had assured Mr. Holwell they would not move out of range of the Fort, but in spite of this promise, about 9 a.m., the *Dodalay* began to move from opposite Mr. Margas' house towards Govindpur or Surman's Gardens.

On shore every effort had been made to bring the men to their duty, but the Armenians and Portuguese were too terrified to be of any use, and it was only by the personal efforts of Drake, Holwell, and Baillie that even the Europeans could be persuaded to resume their arms. To the surprise of the British, the natives had not seized the Company's house when Lieutenant Blagg had abandoned it, and now Ensign Piccard volunteered to reoccupy it with a small party of twenty-five men. About 9.30 a.m. he was brought back wounded. At the same time the enemy's shot began to fly about the Fort, the ships in the river weighed anchor and dropped down, and the boats, on which there was no guard, left the bank, and put off into the river or towards the other side. At this moment Captain Witherington came and whispered to the Governor that all the powder, except that which had been issued, was damp and useless. He was overheard by some of the Portuguese women, and a stampede ensued for the remaining boats, in which, it is said, some 200 women and children were drowned.[2]

Shouts now arose that the enemy were forcing the barriers which ran from the Fort to the waterside, and the capture of which would have cut off all retreat to the river. Drake ordered

[1] Vol. I., p. 262. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 50, and Vol. III., p. 169.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the Factory gate leading to the water to be closed, and field-pieces to be brought up to defend the barriers; but no one paid any attention to his orders, and he saw crowds of gentlemen going down to the boats, amongst them Commandant Minchin and Mr. Macket.[1] Hitherto he had shown no want of courage,[2] however much he had been deficient in other qualities; but now, worn out with want of sleep[3] and distracted by the confusion around him, he thought that everyone was escaping from the Fort, and that he would be left alone to face the anger of the Nawab, who, he knew, was particularly incensed against him personally. He ran down to one of the last boats remaining at the Ghat,[4] and despite the remonstrances of the Adjutant, Captain Grant,[5] had himself rowed on board the *Dodalay*, being fired on from the shore until the last houses in the Settlement were passed.[6]

Captain Grant, who had accompanied Drake, immediately represented the necessity of the ships returning to the Fort to rescue the garrison,[7] but the Captain (Andrew Young) declared the attempt too dangerous;[8] and efforts to persuade other of the ships to put back were altogether unavailing, except in the case of the *Hunter* schooner. Its commander, Captain Nicholson, had to give up the attempt in despair as his *lascars* threatened to jump overboard as soon as his ship got up to the Dockhead.[9] Orme[10] expresses an opinion that the result would have been very different if Drake or some other man of rank had offered to lead the way; but as most of the ships belonged to private owners, who would not obey the Governor's commands, it was thought useless to issue any general

[1] Mr. Macket's wife was very ill, and this was his reason for going aboard (Vol. II., p. 39).

[2] Vol. III., p. 389.

[3] Vol. II., p. 141.

[4] Holwell asserts that, even if there were no more boats at the Crane or Fort Ghat, there were numbers of them along the shore, and that these did not put off until they saw the Governor make his escape (Vol. II., p. 46).

[5] Mr. Pearkes declared 'Captain Minchin's going occasioned not the least concern to anyone, but it was with great difficulty we could persuade ourselves Captain Grant had left us' (Vol. I., p. 201).

[6] Vol. I., p. 158. The French (Vol. I., p. 50) and Mr. Tooke (Vol. I., p. 263) say he was fired on by his own men.

[7] Vol. I., pp. 87, 94.

[8] Vol. II., p. 45. On the 20th August Captain Young had the audacity to put in a claim for damages sustained by his ship during the siege.

[9] Vol. I., p. 159, and Vol. II., p. 157.

[10] Orme MSS., O.V., 66, p. 147.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

order to the ships to move up to the Fort. Some of the gentlemen on board tried to get ashore, but even Mr. Macket's offer of 1,000 rupees for a boat met with no response.[1] Thus many gallant men,[2] who had gone on board with full leave from their superiors, who had no intention of deserting their comrades, and who had stayed on board only under the impression that a general retreat was being made, were involved in the shameful action of their commanders. All that the latter did was to send up orders to the *Prince George*, which was still above the Fort, to drop down and take off the remainder of the garrison. The same evening the ships fell down below the Town to Govindpur,[3] at the extremity of the British territory.

At 3 p.m. Drake and his companions saw that the *Prince George* had run aground[4] opposite Omichand's house.[5] This was due to the pilot (Francis Morris), a Dutchman,[6] having lost his presence of mind. It appears that she might have been got off if Drake had only sent up a spare anchor; but this he or Captain Young refused to do, on the pretext that they could not spare any,[7] so she was left to her fate and burnt by the natives.[8] The Captain (Thomas Hague) and Messrs. Pearkes and Lewis, who had been sent up from the Fort, escaped to the Dutch, who surrendered them to the Nawab's officers.[9] They were soon after set free.

As evening drew in, the Dockhead, the Company's house, and Mr. Cruttenden's appeared in flames, and the fire and smoke hid the Fort from the sight of the fugitives.

On the morning of the 20th, the smoke having cleared away, the Fort was distinctly visible, and the enemy appeared to be close under the walls. Signals were seen flying, but it was supposed that these were hung out by the natives to lure the ships back, and no notice was taken of them.[10] In the afternoon it was evident that the Fort had surrendered, and the ships fell down a little lower to Surman's Garden,[11] where they

Sunday, 20th June, 1756.

[1] Vol. I., p. 105.

[2] Holwell mentions especially Messrs. Mapletoft, Wedderburn, Douglas, and Sumner (Vol. I., p. 189; see also Vol. III., p. 389).

[3] The site of the present Fort William.

[4] Vol. I., p. 159. Holwell says she ran aground at 11 a.m. (Vol. II., p. 44).

[5] Vol. I., p. 114. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 42. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 292.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 25, note. [9] *Ibid.*, p. 42. [10] Vol. II., p. 45.

[11] Watts says to Jungaraul (Vol. III., p. 335).

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

were joined by Messrs. Cooke and Lushington, and a few other fugitives.

Here the following ships were collected: the *Dodalay*, *Fame*, *Lively*, *Diligence*, *Ann*, *Fortune*, *London*, *Neptune*, *Calcutta*, *Hunter*, and four or five other small vessels.

21st June, 1756. On the morning of the 21st, as no prospect appeared of anyone else being able to join them, and there being some danger of pursuit, an attempt was made to pass below Tanna Fort; but the *Neptune* and the *Calcutta* ran aground, were captured by the natives, and plundered.[1] Apparently a number of the ladies fell into the hands of the Nawab's soldiers, but were well treated and immediately released, probably on the payment of a ransom.[2]

The evening of the same day they were joined by the ships *Speedwell* and *Bombay*,[3] which had forced the passage. Encouraged by this reinforcement, and having a favourable wind, the fleet, which had returned to Surman's, again attempted to pass

24th June, 1756. Tanna, and was this time successful. On the 24th they passed Budge Budge, and were joined by the *Success* galley from Madras; but the same day the *Diligence* went ashore, and was plundered.[4]

It was now ascertained that the Nawab was fortifying Budge Budge, and had given orders to the country people not to supply the British with provisions,

> 'of which we were very short, not having a week's sustenance in the fleet of either food, wood, or water, every vessel being crouded with men, women, and children, country-born Portugueze.'[5]

25th June, 1756. 26th June, 1756. This forced them to set ashore all those who 'had no connection with the Europeans.' They then proceeded to Fulta, where, after writing to the Dutch for assistance on the 25th,[6] they arrived on the 26th June, and were secretly provided by the Dutch, who had

[1] Mr. Tooke says these ships could have been easily rescued (Vol. I., p. 296). These two ships and the *Diligence* were the richest in the fleet (Vol. II., p. 30).

[2] Vol. I., pp. 52, 183.

[3] Holwell says these ships joined the fleet before the fall of the Fort (Vol. II., p. 13).

[4] The Captains and officers of the *Diligence* and ships wrecked at Tanna arrived at Chandernagore on the 2nd July (Vol. I., p. 53).

[5] Vol. I., p. 161.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

a small Settlement there, with provisions, anchors, and other necessary stores.

Thus was successfully made, with comparatively little loss, a retreat which, from the circumstances attending it, seemed certain to be disastrous, for on the fleet there was no order and no discipline. The half-caste women were so little sensible of their danger that it was with the utmost difficulty that they could be persuaded to go below decks when the ships were under fire whilst passing Tanna Fort,[1] and a French account asserts that had the natives had a few gunners who knew their business not a ship would have escaped.[2] Whilst passing down they met a French ship, *Le Silhouet*, and forced the commander to give them some provisions.[3] So desperate was their condition that the French wrote to their captains to be on their guard lest the British should resort to violence in order to obtain supplies, and so possibly involve them in trouble with the Nawab.[4]

[1] Vol. III., p. 406.
[2] Vol. I., p. 181.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 52.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER VI.

THE BLACK HOLE.

'There are some scenes in real life so full of misery and horror that the boldest imagination would not dare to feign them for fear of shocking credibility.' —HOLWELL.[1]

19th June, 1756. As soon as the desertion of Drake and Minchin was known to the remnant of the inmates in the Fort, there followed an outburst of rage and horror, which was only quieted by the necessities of their position. Without counting the Armenians and Portuguese, they found that they numbered 170 men[2] capable of defence.[3] A council was hurriedly called. Drake and the other fugitive members of Council were suspended,[4] and it was decided to supersede Mr. Pearkes, the senior member of Council present, and to call upon Mr. Holwell to take the command. The exact reasons for this choice are unknown.[5] Mr. Holwell was the oldest of the members of Council, having entered the Company's service at a later age than most, but he was not popular, and afterwards attempts were made to prove that he himself had contemplated flight, and was only prevented by others having run off with his boat.[6] On the other hand, his position as *Zamīndār* or Magistrate of Calcutta must have brought him into contact with all classes of the community, and so, whether he was popular or not, must have acquainted people with his capacity for command. Mr. Pearkes offered to give place to him in military matters, but wished to keep the post of Civil Governor. Mr. Holwell refused

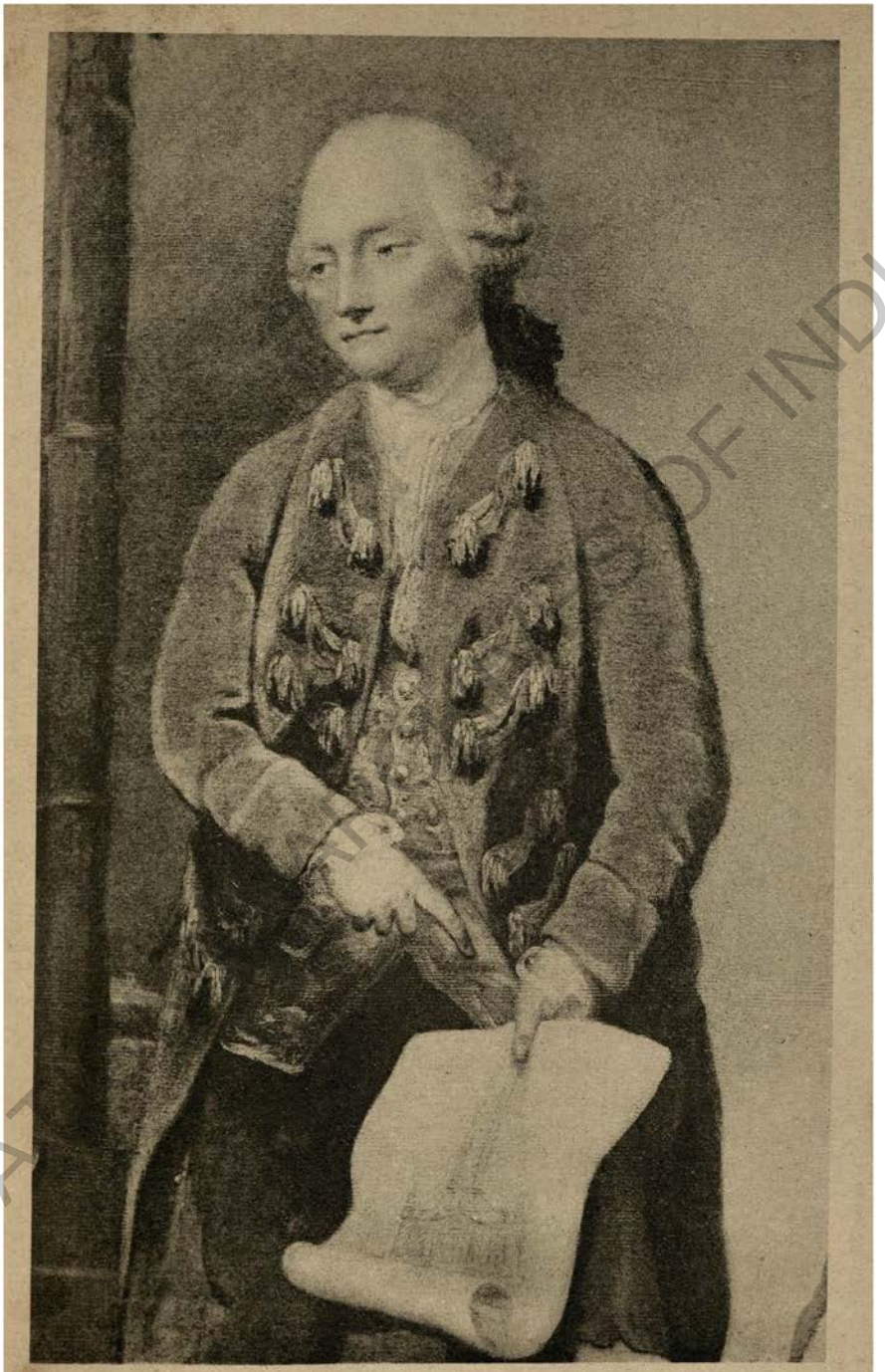
[1] Vol. III., p. 132.

[2] 'More than 200 men' (Law, Vol. III., p. 169). This is more likely the correct figure.

[3] Vol. II., p. 29. [4] Vol. I., p. 113, and Vol. III., p. 341. [5] Vol. III. 341, 342.

[6] Vol. I., p. 168. For his reply, see Vol. II., p. 47.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA



JOHN ZEPHANIAH HOLWELL.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF INDIA

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

a divided responsibility, and Mr. Pearkes gave in, so Mr. Holwell was appointed Governor and Administrator of the Company's affairs during the troubles.[1] Captain Lewis was at the same time appointed Master Attendant in place of Captain Graham, who was absent from Calcutta. It was determined to carry out the retreat —previously agreed on in the Council of the 18th—by means of the *Prince George*[2] and one of the Moor ships which had been taken at the beginning of the siege.[3] To effect this it was necessary to send messengers to Captain Hague. Messrs. Pearkes and Lewis volunteered, and what happened to them has been already narrated.

The small number of men remaining on shore made it not only impossible to hold the surrounding houses, but very unlikely that the defenders would be able to hold the Fort itself. Mr. Holwell therefore recalled the parties in the Church and the houses belonging to Messrs. Cruttenden and Eyre. and with the other gentlemen went round the walls, declaring his 'abhorrence' of Drake's cowardly action, and swearing to defend the place to the last, whilst to encourage the men he promised that three chests of treasure which were in the Fort should be distributed amongst them if they would hold out until a retreat could be effected. Signals were at the same time hoisted to induce the fleet to return.[4]

Thus encouraged, the garrison stood gallantly to their defence, but though the enemy's big guns were perhaps purposely too badly served by the French and Portuguese gunners to produce any great effect,[5] the musketry from the houses was so deadly that many men were killed, and it was almost impossible to stand upon the ramparts. Nothing was known of the *Prince George* being aground, but everyone was convinced that after their panic was over the men on board would bring up the fleet again. In this vain hope they passed a terrible night, the darkness of which was lit up by the flames of the houses burning all round them. The soldiers now refused obedience to their officers, broke open the rooms of the gentlemen and officers who had deserted the Fort, and made themselves drunk with the liquor they found there and

[1] Vol. II., p. 38.

[2] Holwell always calls this ship the *Saint George*, but the Log of the *Prince George* shows that she was the ship present.

[3] Vol. I., p. 185. [4] Vol. III., p. 298. [5] Vol. I., p. 114, and Vol. III., p. 73.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

in the warehouses. In the night a corporal and fifty-six soldiers, chiefly Dutch, deserted to the enemy.[1]

Sunday, 20th June, 1756.

With break of day on the 20th June—the most fatal Sunday ever known in Calcutta—the enemy assailed the Fort on every side, but in spite of their immense superiority in numbers and the demoralization of the British, they were repulsed with loss. On the other hand the defenders had lost heavily, forty men being killed and wounded on a single bastion.[2] The ammunition was almost entirely expended, and Captain Witherington and Mr. Baillie urged upon Holwell the necessity of asking for a truce. This he refused to do until the enemy had been convinced of the ability of the garrison to repulse them, as that would give a much better prospect of success;[3] so the fighting went on till noon, when there was a general cessation.[4] The British had now lost 25 men killed and 70 wounded, and all but 14 of the artillery were killed.[5]

It seems that when Drake left the Fort the fact that Omichand was imprisoned was generally forgotten; but on Sunday morning Holwell recalled the matter to mind, and persuaded him to write a letter to Raja Mānik Chand, one of the Nawab's favourites, asking his intercession. This was despatched, and about 2 o'clock Holwell was notified that a man had appeared in the street opposite the Fort gate making signs to the defenders to stop firing. Holwell accordingly hailed him from the ramparts, and was told that if fighting ceased an accommodation might be come to. Thinking this was the result of Omichand's letter, and hoping to amuse the enemy till nightfall, when a retreat might be effected, either on the *Prince George* or by land, to the ships, Holwell hoisted a flag of truce and told the men to rest and refresh themselves; but about 4 o'clock, when they had laid down their arms, word was brought to him that the Moors were crowding close up to the walls, and at the same moment that the little gate leading from the Fort to the river had been burst open by a Dutch sergeant named Hedleburgh[6]

[1] Vol. I., pp. 42, 102, 108, 114. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 168. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

[4] This cessation of fighting for rest and refreshment at mid-day seems to have been usual in Indian armies—e.g., the 'Seir Mutaqherin' (vol. ii., p. 353) tells us that Captain Knox took advantage of it to surprise the camp of Kāmgār Khān. The natives thought that the British habit of effecting surprises of this kind and of making night attacks was contrary to the etiquette of war

[5] Vol. I., p. 114, and Vol II., p. 29. [6] Vol. I., p. 185.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and delivered to the enemy, possibly in collusion with the Dutch soldiers who had deserted the night before.[1] Immediately after the natives scaled the walls on all sides by means of bamboos, which they used as ladders,

'with precipitation scarce credible to Europeans,'[2]

and cut to pieces all who resisted, especially all those who wore red coats,[3] amongst them Lieutenant Blagg, who refused to lay down his sword. Mr. Holwell and the other gentlemen, who expected no mercy from the Nawab, now prepared to die fighting, but a native officer approaching and offering them quarter, they surrendered their arms. Mr. Holwell was taken to a part of the ramparts from which he could see the Nawab, to whom he made his *salaam*. This was courteously returned. Immediately all fighting ceased, and the common people, who had run out of the Fort and were trying to escape by the river, in which effort many were drowned, were induced to deliver themselves up. The Nawab was carried round to the riverside in his litter with his younger brother, and then entered the Fort. He had that evening three interviews with Mr. Holwell. To the first Mr. Holwell had been brought with his hands bound. The Nawab released him from his bonds, and promised him on the word of a soldier that no harm should befall him.[4] On the other hand, he expressed great anger at the presumption of the British in resisting him, and much displeasure against Mr. Drake,[5] ordering the Government or Factory House, which he supposed to belong to him, to be burnt down. He admired the European houses, and said the British were fools to force him to destroy so fine a town. After a time he left the Fort, and took up his abode in Mr. Wedderburn's house.[6] The Portuguese and Armenians were allowed to go free and disappeared,[7] and several of the Europeans simply walked out of the Fort, making their escape to Hugli or the ships at Surman's.[8] About this time a certain Leech, the Company's carpenter, came to inform Mr. Holwell that he could carry him out of the Fort by a secret passage, and that he had a boat ready in which they

[1] Vol. III., pp. 155, 300.
[2] Vol. I., p. 160.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[4] Vol. II., p. 51.
[5] Vol. I., pp. 60, 98.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[7] Vol. II., p. 182, and Vol. III., p. 301.
[8] Vol. I., p. 43.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

might escape. Mr. Holwell, however, refused to leave the other gentlemen, and Leech gallantly resolved to stay with him and share his fortunes. So far everything seemed to be going well. The native soldiers had plundered the Europeans of their valuables, but did not ill-treat them, and the Muhammadan priests were occupied in singing a song of thanksgiving.[1] Suddenly the scene changed. Some European soldiers[2] had made themselves drunk and assaulted the natives. The latter complained to the Nawab, who asked where the Europeans were accustomed to confine soldiers who had misbehaved in any way. He was told in the Black Hole, and, as some of his officers suggested it would be dangerous to leave so many prisoners at large during the night, ordered that they should all be confined in it. The native officers, who were enraged at the great losses inflicted on them by the defenders, for it is said 7,000 perished in the siege,[3] applied this order to all the prisoners without distinction, and to the number of 146 they were crowded into a little chamber intended to hold only one or two private soldiers, and only about 18 feet square,[4] and this upon one of the hottest nights of the year. The dreadful suffering that followed, the madness which drove the prisoners to trample each other down and to fight for the water which only added to their torture, the insults they poured upon their jailors in order to induce them to fire on them and so end their misery,[5] and the brutal delight of the native soldiers at a sight which they looked upon as a *tamāshā*, are all told in Mr. Holwell's narrative,[6] than which nothing more pathetic is to be found in the annals of the British in India. From 7 o'clock in the evening to 6 o'clock in the morning this agony lasted, for even the native officers who pitied them dared not disturb the Nawab before he awoke from his slumbers,

21st June, 1756.

[1] Vol. III., p. 301.

[2] Vol. I., p. 160. Some accounts say it was the Dutch who deserted on the night of the 19th (Vol. III., p. 155).

[3] Vol. I., pp. 115, 171, 186. Other accounts say 12,000 to 15,000 (Vol. III., p. 79). The French and Dutch reported 2,000 wounded in the hospital at Hugli.

[4] Dr. C. R. Wilson has ascertained that the exact dimensions were 18 feet by 14 feet 10 inches (*Indian Church Review*).

[5] Vol. III., p. 170.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 133-152.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

when only twenty-three of one hundred and forty-six who went in came out alive, the ghastlyest forms that were ever seen alive, from this infernal scene of horror.'[1]

The survivors included the one woman who is known to have gone into the Black Hole with her husband.

The Nawab had sent for Mr. Holwell to know what had become of the money which his officers told him must have been hidden in the Fort, for his men had found in the Treasury of the richest of the European Settlements only the miserable amount of 50,000 rupees, or about £6,250. Holwell vainly protested his ignorance, and reproached the Nawab with his breach of faith. The Nawab would listen to nothing, and Holwell and three others of the survivors—viz., Messrs. Court and Burdet and Ensign Walcot—were handed over to Mīr Madan as prisoners.[2] All of them had offended Omichand, and he was now in high favour with the Nawab, as was also Krishna Dās, both of whom he had released, and who had received from him dresses of honour. It was supposed that to gratify their revenge these two men invented the tale of the hidden treasure.

Mīr Madan took his prisoners in a common bullock-cart to Omichand's garden. On the 22nd they were marched in a hot sun to the Dockhead, and lodged in an open verandah facing the river. Here their bodies burst out into terrible boils, caused, as they supposed, by the excessive perspiration during their confinement in the Black Hole. On the 24th—apparently without the Nawab's orders—they were embarked on a boat and sent to Murshidabad, enduring hardships on the way which make it wonderful that in their weak state they were able to survive at all. From everyone but their guards—from the French, Dutch, and Armenians, and even from poor natives who had served the British in happier days—they met with acts of pity and kindness.

22nd June, 1756.

24th June 1756.

[1] Orme MSS., O.V., 66, p. 145. Holwell afterwards erected a monument to his fellow-sufferers, on or near the spot where their bodies were buried, just outside of the east gate of the Fort. This was probably some time in 1758-1759, when he was Governor of Bengal. The monument, which was of brick, fell into disrepair, and was further damaged by lightning, and finally, in 1821, the then Governor-General, the Marquis of Hastings, ordered it to be pulled down. Lord Curzon has recently replaced it by a marble replica.

[2] Vol. II., p. 52, and Vol. III., pp. 145, 303.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

7th July, 1756. On the 7th July they arrived at Murshidabad,[1] where they were again imprisoned. The Nawab arrived on the 11th July, but he did not see them until the 16th.

'The wretched spectacle we made must, I think, have made an impression on a breast the most brutal, and if he is capable of pity or contrition his heart felt it then. I think it appeared, in spight of him, in his countenance. He gave me no reply, but ordered a *sootapurdar* and *chubdar* immediately to see our irons cut off, and to conduct us wherever we chose to go, and to take care we received no trouble nor insult; and having repeated this order distinctly, directed his retinue to go on.'[2]

16th July, 1756.

It appears that the Nawab's grandmother, the widow of Alīvirdī, and probably also his mother, Amīna Begam,[3] had interceded for the prisoners. On the other hand, there were not wanting persons to advise that so bold a man as Holwell should not be allowed to go free, and that he should be sent down to Calcutta, where the native Governor, Mānik Chand, would know how to make him give up the secret of the hidden treasure, or at any rate to exact a ransom from him. Sirāj-uddaula replied with unexpected generosity:

'It may be. If he has anything left, let him keep it. His sufferings have been great. He shall have his liberty.'[4]

The released prisoners repaired joyfully to the Dutch Mint,[5] where they were kindly treated. Towards the end of the month they made their way down to Hugli, and a little later rejoined the rest of the British at Fulta on the 12th or 13th August. Here Ensign Walcot, who had been wounded during the siege, died of the hardships he had subsequently undergone.[6]

12th-13th August, 1756.

We must now return to the Fort. Besides Holwell and his three companions, the following persons survived the Black Hole: Messrs. Cooke, Lushington, Captains Mills and Dickson; fourteen seamen and soldiers, viz., Patrick Moran, John and Thomas

[1] Mr. Sykes says they passed Cossimbazar on the 8th July (Vol. I., p. 61).

[2] Vol. III., p. 152.

[3] The interest of these ladies in the English merchants may have been partly due to the fact that they also were accustomed to speculate in commerce. Mr. Forth mentions (Vol. II., p. 63) how very angry Amīna Begam was with Omichand for getting the better of them in the sale of some opium and saltpetre at Calcutta.

[4] Vol. III., p. 152.

[5] Vol. I., p. 115, and Vol. III., p. 152.

[6] On the 12th September, 1756 (Vol. III., p. 21).

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Meadows, John Angel, John Burgaft, John Arndt, John Jones, Philip Cosall, Peter Thomas, John Gatliff, John Boirs, Barnard Clelling, Richard Aillery,[1] and John Roop,[2] and one woman, Mrs. Carey. Mr. Drake[3] says there were twenty-five survivors. He probably includes Captain Purnell and Lieutenant Talbot, who died after being let out.[4] Mr. Scrafton says[5] that many others showed signs of life, and might have been revived with a little care and attention. One of these, according to a French account, was Mr. Eyre, a member of Council.[6]

The same day, the 21st, the Nawab ordered all Europeans to quit the Town under penalty of losing their nose and ears, and renamed the place Alinagar—that is, city of Alī.[7] He also gave orders to build a mosque in the Fort. This was done, and a part of the east curtain pulled down to make room for it. 21st June, 1756.

Those of the survivors who were able to walk now left the Town. Messrs. Cooke and Lushington joined the ships at Surman's Garden.[8]

'Their appearance, and the dreadful tale they had to tell, were the severest of reproaches to those on board, who, intent only on their own preservation, had made no effort to facilitate the escape of the rest of the garrison.'[9]

Captains Mills[10] and Dickson, Mr. Patrick Moran, and a fourth man whose name is lost, reached Surman's after the ships had started. There one of the Nawab's officers advised them to return for fear of insult and possible ill-treatment, so they came back to Govindpur, where they were secretly fed by natives who had lived under the British flag in Calcutta. The Nawab now permitting the inhabitants to return to Calcutta, they joined Messrs. John Knox[11] and George Gray, and took up their abode in the house of the former, where they were assisted by Omichand; but on

[1] Vol. I., p. 44. [2] 'East Indian Chronologist.' [3] Vol. I., p. 161.

[4] I think that probably Ensign Carstairs also went through the ordeal of the Black Hole (Vol. I., p. 189, and Vol. II., p. 27).

[5] 'Reflections,' p. 100. [6] Vol. I., p. 50.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 264. Probably after his grandfather, Alīvirdī Khān.

[8] Vol. I., pp. 43, 168. [9] Orme MSS., O.V., 66, p. 147. [10] Vol. I., p. 194.

[11] Dr. John Knox, senior, was one of the Company's surgeons. John Knox, junior, had also been trained as a surgeon (*Ives' Journal*, p. 189), but made his living as a supercargo. I mention this because Captain Mills' notes (Vol. I., pp. 40-45) are so rough that one might suspect the accuracy of such details as 'two Doctors Noxes'; yet, wherever I have been able to find further information, he proves to be always correct

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

1st July, 1756. the 30th June a drunken soldier killed a Muhammadan, and the Europeans were again expelled on the following day.[1] They then retreated to the French Gardens and so to Hugli and Chandernagore, whence they were enabled to get down to Fulta on the

10th August, 1756. 10th August. At Chandernagore there were no less than 110 sick and wounded British soldiers in the French hospital.[2] Many of these were really French or Dutch, and some of them, it appears, enlisted either now or later on under the French flag.[3]

It is difficult to estimate the actual loss of the British. In the Black Hole 123 perished, of whom we can trace the names of only 56;[4] between 50 and 100 must have perished in the fighting or died of their sufferings during the siege or at Fulta,[5] and, if general rumour can be trusted, many whites and half-castes were drowned in the effort to escape.[6]

I have mentioned that before the siege Council sent word to the up-country Factories to take precautions. Messrs. Amyatt and Boddam, the Chiefs of Luckipur (or Jagdea) and Balasore, managed to escape with much of the Company's property, but at Dacca there was no possibility of doing so. The Chief, Mr. Becher, was forced to surrender his Factory to the *Nāib* or Deputy Nawab,

[1] Vol. I., pp. 45, 194. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 106. [3] Vol. III., p. 226.

[4] These were the Rev. Gervas Bellamy; Messrs. Jenks, Reveley, Law, Coles or Cotes, Valicourt, Jebb, Torriano, Edward and Stephen Page, Grub, Street, Harrod, Patrick Johnstone, Ballard, Nathan Drake, Carse, Knapton, Gosling, Byng, Dodd, Dalrymple; Captains Clayton, Buchanan, Witherington; Lieutenants Hays, Simson, Bellamy; Ensigns Scot, Hastings, Wedderburn; and Messrs. Dumbleton, Abraham, Cartwright, Bleau, Hunt, Osborne, Leach, Porter, Henry and William Stopford, Robert Carey, Caulker, Bendall, Atkinson, Jennings, Meadows, Reid or Read, Barnett, Frere, Wilson, Burton, Tilley, Lyon, Alsop, Hillier. Lord Curzon adds to this list the name of Eleanor Weston, and a few of the names of those I have given as being killed during the fighting.

[5] The only names I can trace are Messrs. Thomas Bellamy, Thoresby, Charles Smith, Wilkinson; Captain-Lieutenant Smith, Messrs. Collins, Tidecombe, Pickering, Whitby, Baillie; Lieutenants Bishop and Blagg; Ensign Piccard; Messrs. Peter Carey, Stevenson, Guy, Parker, Eyre, Purnell; Lieutenant Talbot; the Rev. Mr. Mapletoft; Messrs. Hyndman, Vasmer, Lindsay; Drs. Inglis and Wilson; Lieutenant Keene; Ensign Walcot; Messrs. Daniel and James Macpherson, Derrickson, Margas, Graham, Best, Baldwin, Surman, Bruce, Coverley, Osborne, Montrong, Coquelin, Janniko, Johnson, Laing, Nicholson, Maria Cornelius, Mrs. Cruttenden, Mrs. Gooding, Mrs. Bellamy, and Charlotte Becher.

[6] M. Renault (Vol. I., p. 208) probably underestimates the loss when he puts it at only 200. He adds that 3,000 refugees—*i.e.*, half-castes, Armenians, and Portuguese—came to Chandernagore.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Dasarath Khān, but was allowed to take shelter with his subordinates and the English ladies in the French Factory, where he was very kindly received by the Chief, M. Courtin. The influence of M. Courtin, supported by that of M. Law at Murshidabad, obtained their ultimate release, though M. Law says:

'Siraj-uddaula, being informed that there were two or three very charming English ladies there, was strongly tempted to adorn his harem with them.'[1]

This is probably a libel. It was not the custom of the Muhammadans to ill-treat ladies, and Sirāj-uddaula had had in his grandfather a good example of chivalry to the women-folk of his enemies,[2] and as a matter of fact the whole of the party escaped safely to Fulta, where they arrived on the 26th August in a sloop lent them by M. Courtin.[3] M. Renault tells us that Dasarath Khān found in the Dacca Factory merchandise and silver worth 1,400,000 rupees,[4] which will give the reader some idea of the value of the British up-country trade.

The only Factory in Bengal that remained in the possession of the British was the little out-station of Bulramgurry at the mouth of the Balasore River, which,

'by its situation, having escaped the Government's notice, and by the prudent conduct of Mr. John Bristow[5] (left resident at Ballasore by Mr. Boddam), is still retained.'[6]

We shall hear of this little place again.

The loss of its Factories in Bengal was a very serious one, and the damage done to the Company was calculated as being at least 95 *lakhs* of rupees, exclusive of the interruption of trade.[7] Clive wrote home that the losses of private persons exceeded £2,000,000,[8] and the Nawab's revenues were diminished by the ruin of trade throughout the province, for everyone was now afraid to have any dealings with the Europeans. And after having effected all this damage, the Nawab had found in the Fort the trifling sum of some 50,000 rupees.

Before leaving the subject a few words may be added in reference to the behaviour of the Europeans generally. As regards the servants of the Company in civil employ, no less than twenty-five out of

[1] Vol. III., p. 171.
[2] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. i., p. 340, and vol. ii., p. 58.
[3] Vol. III., p. 20.
[4] Vol. I., p. 208.
[5] A surgeon.
[6] Vol. II., p. 14.
[7] Vol. I., p. 293.
[8] Vol. II., p. 210.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the fifty-three present in Calcutta perished in the fighting or in the Black Hole; five survived the Black Hole and many others were wounded; of the two clergymen, one died in the Black Hole; of the military, all the officers, except the Commandant and Captain Grant, did their duty to the end of the siege, and, with the exception of Ensigns Walcot and Carstairs, perished in the fighting or the Black Hole. In the medical profession we find the Company's surgeons, Drs. Inglis and Fullerton, and the private practitioners, Drs. Gray, Taylor, and John Knox, senior. All of them stayed in Calcutta up to the fall of the Fort, except, perhaps, Dr. Fullerton, a man of known courage, who, if he was on board Drake's fleet, must have been there in his professional capacity. In the sea-faring profession there were a number of Europeans who served ashore until ordered on board their ships. Many of these were killed or wounded, and it is difficult to believe that their failure to relieve the remnant of the garrison was due to any cause but the unwillingness of the shipowners to risk their overcrowded and undermanned vessels or the difficulty of moving them up in the two tides which intervened between Drake's desertion and the capture of the Fort.

Ever since the story of the Black Hole became generally known there have been vague rumours that several of the sufferers were women, but we know for certain of only one, a Mrs. Carey, the wife of a seafaring man, who himself died in the Black Hole. Later on[1] she said that her mother and young sister were with her, and that they died either there or earlier in the siege. The only accounts which mention women as entering the Black Hole state that there was one woman only,[2] yet the *Calcutta Gazette* for the 19th October, 1815, mentions the death of a Mrs. Knox, who is said to have been the last survivor of the

'horrid scene of the Black Hole in 1756. She was at that time fourteen years of age, and the wife of a Doctor Knox.'[3]

Probably the reference to the Black Hole is an amplification, for in the careless talk of Calcutta the Black Hole and Fort William seem to have been often confounded.

[1] Busteed's 'Old Calcutta,' third edition, 1897, pp. 35-37.

[2] Vol. III., pp. 170, 302, and Orme MSS., O.V., 66, p. 146. 'The only one of her sex amongst the sufferers.'

[3] This entry was pointed out to me by Lieutenant-Colonel D. G. Crawford, I.M.S.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

As to the sufferings of the women in other ways we have various fragments of information. In the Mayor's Court Proceedings of the 3rd May, 1757, it is stated that one Maria Cornelius was killed during the siege.[1] Hickey's *Bengal Gazette*, March 3rd to 10th, 1781, records the funeral of a Mrs. Bower, who hid herself in one of the warehouses on the capture of the Fort, and then made her escape on board of a small vessel lying in the river. In the church at Bandel there is to be found the tombstone of one Elizabeth de Sylva, who was buried on the 21st November, 1756, having 'died of sufferings caused by the war waged by the Moors against the British.' On page 6 of Buckle's 'Memoir of the Services of the Bengal Artillery' there is given an inscription found written in charcoal on the wall of a small mosque near Chunar saying that one Ann Wood, wife of Lieutenant John Wood, had been kept there as a prisoner by Mīr Jafar, and that she had been

'taken out of the house at Calcutta, where so many unhappy gentlemen suffered.'

Possibly this refers to the Black Hole, but more likely to Fort William. This is all that is known positively about the sufferings of the women during the siege, but there can be little doubt that many of the lower classes were killed or drowned or died of the hardships they were exposed to,[2] and that others were carried away by the native soldiers.[3] A French account says that 100 white women and as many white children were carried up country.[4] It is hardly necessary to point out that there were not so many white women or white children in Calcutta, and the lists of the refugees at Fulta show that almost all the white ladies and children were on board the ships that escaped.[5] We have already noticed the kindness of Mīr Jafar's officer, Omar Beg, to the British at the attack on Cossimbazar, and Ghulām Husain tells us[6] that this officer restored to their husbands a number of English ladies who had fallen into his hands. How they came into his hands is not known, but it was probably at the time when the *Neptune*, *Calcutta*, and *Diligence* were wrecked.

[1] Vol. III., p. 407.
[2] Vol. I., p. 50, and Vol. III., p. 86.
[3] Vol. I., p. 181.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 243.
[5] Vol. III., p. 76. In Buckle's 'Memoirs of the Bengal Artillery,' p. 6, note, there is a reference to a young boy who was carried up country and made a eunuch by his captors.
[6] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 290.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE NEWS WAS SENT HOME.

'All London is in consternation.'—*Courrier d'Avignon.*[1]

As soon as the fleet arrived at Fulta, Drake and the Council took measures to inform the Madras authorities of the disaster which had befallen them, but advised that the news should not be sent home until the Council of Fort St. George could also announce at the same time that they had taken steps for the recovery of Calcutta. No formal official account was ever sent. This was promised in Council's letter of the 17th September, 1756,[2] but owing to the impossibility of composing a narrative which all the members of Council would consent to sign, the latter stated in their letter of the 31st January, 1757,[3] that they left the Directors to draw their own conclusions from the several private and official letters already transmitted.

News of the capture of Fort William arrived at Madras on the 16th August, 1756,[4] but did not reach London until the 2nd June, 1757, on which day the *London Chronicle*[5] published a short paragraph from Paris dated the 27th May giving the first intimation of the disaster. On the 4th June this was confirmed by letters brought by the *Portfield*, *Edgecote*, and *Chesterfield*, which arrived on the coast of Ireland on the 28th and 29th May.[6]

How was it the news came first to Paris? It was known there as early as the 21st May, for the *Courrier d'Avignon* of the 27th May gives it as Paris news of the 21st, though the *Gazettes de France* do not mention it until the 18th June, when they publish it as news from

[1] Vol. III., p. 120. [2] Vol. I., p. 214. [3] Vol. II., p. 186.
[4] Vol. I., p. 204.
[5] The Scotch papers have the same news as the English, generally about a week later (see Appendix II.).
[6] Vol. III., p. 26.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

London of the 7th June. As a matter of fact, it had come overland from the Persian Gulf owing to the enterprise of a French Agent. It had been sent from Madras to Bombay, and thence despatched at the end of October in duplicate by the *Edgecote* direct to England,[1] and by the *Phœnix* to Bussora,[2] to be transmitted thence overland. A letter from Gombroon of the 28th November, 1756, says the *Phœnix* arrived there the preceding day, and a letter from Bussora dated 27th January, 1757, says she was wrecked near Bushire. The *Gazette d'Utrecht* of the 2nd June tells us the remainder of the story.[3] The pilot or supercargo of the *Phœnix* was indiscreet, and by the 26th January the news was known in the town. The French Agent thought the report was confirmed by the appearance and conduct of the British Agent, who appeared very much distressed, and who was at the same time engaged in buying up all the Indian goods he could find in the market. He accordingly sent word viâ Constantinople to Paris.

As far as can be gathered from the Court Minutes the Directors did their best to minimize the panic which struck London on the arrival of the news, and in doing this they were much assisted by the accompanying information that the Madras authorities were despatching a force for the recovery of Calcutta, and by the arrival on the 22nd July[4] of the despatches by the *Syren* announcing the recovery of Fort William. She had sailed from Calcutta on the 2nd February,[5] and arrived at Plymouth on the 19th July.[6]

The advices which arrived by the India ships contained no authentic details of the loss of life, but this defect was partly supplied in private letters. These were published, but without the writers' names.

As regards the loss of property, the Directors congratulated themselves that the disaster could not have happened at a time less harmful for the Company, for it took place after the despatch of the *Denham* in March, which ship had cleared the warehouses of all the fine goods, and before any others could be brought in from the *aurungs*. Also no ships had landed any treasure or cargo there since the sailing of the *Denham*.

[1] Arrived at Limerick on the 28th May (Court Minutes, 10 June, 1757).
[2] Abstracts of Bombay Letters, 30th October, 1756 (India Office).
[3] Vol. III., p. 117. [4] Vol. II., p. 455. [5] Vol. III., p. 24. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

On the 27th July the Court passed an order dismissing Captain Minchin and summoning him home immediately,[1] but refrained from coming to any decision about Mr. Drake, except in so far as they omitted his name from the new Council which they nominated. Curiously enough, Colonel Clive's name was also omitted from this list in the Court's General Letter which was despatched on the 11th November, 1757, and arrived in Calcutta late in 1758. On the 27th January, 1758, the Court resolved—

'That Roger Drake, Esq., late President of Bengal, be continued in the Company's service, and remain as and at the head of the Senior Merchants and with their appointments, without interfering in the Company's affairs.'

This seems to be all that was done by the Court in the way of punishment for the loss of the finest Settlement they possessed in the Indies. It is true that at the end of the year 1759 Dr. Hugh Baillie attempted to induce the Court to open an inquiry into Mr. Drake's behaviour, but as he was not in a position to produce any positive evidence of the Governor's misconduct, the Committee of Correspondence informed Mr. Drake

'that they did not think fit to proceed further in the said matter.'

Such indifference appears somewhat strange, but it must be remembered that the East India Company was a trading company, and the Directors possibly thought it a waste of time to enter into an inquiry which would have necessitated the bringing of witnesses many thousands of miles, and their detention in England for probably many months. Further, the contradictory evidence already given by the chief officials in their private and official letters rendered it extremely doubtful whether any definite conclusion could be come to—*i.e.*, any conclusion which would warrant the punishment of any particular person ;[2] and, lastly, though there had been a great loss of property, the treaty with Mīr Jafar soon furnished not only the Company, but private

[1] Captain Minchin did not return to England. He died in Calcutta on the 5th January, 1758.

[2] There was even danger of a Court of Inquiry laying the whole blame upon the policy of the Court of Directors, for we find Clive writing: 'I shall only add that there never was that attention paid to the advice of military men at Calcutta as was consistent with the safety of the place when in danger—a total ignorance of which was the real cause of the loss of Fort William' (Vol. II., p. 245).

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

individuals with ample compensation. It was true that many Europeans had been killed, and that London especially had lost a number of very promising young men

'belonging to the best families in London,'[1]

but such losses were frequent amongst traders in foreign parts—*e.g.*, the loss of life was even more severe when the *Doddington* was wrecked.[2] The circumstances were doubtless particularly painful, but the Nawab, whom everyone held responsible for the Black Hole tragedy, was dead, and the newspapers published not infrequently accounts of sufferings almost as terrible endured by sailors in time of war.[3] In short, it was one of those unfortunate incidents which good business men would think best forgotten. Accordingly, the Court of Directors limited its action to the recall of Drake and Minchin, the promotion of a few of its servants, the recommendation of certain pilots and merchants to the Council's attention, in case anything should turn up in their line, and to the making of some not over-generous grants of money to the wives of men who had fallen in the Company's service.[4]

After his retirement Drake married a Miss Henrietta Baker, daughter of the Rev. John Baker, D.D.,[5] and died on the 4th August, 1766.[6]

[1] Vol. III., p. 170. I have not been able to trace the antecedents of all the Company's servants in Bengal at this time, but of those concerning whom information is available no less than fourteen were born in the County of Middlesex.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 75. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

[4] Thus Mary, wife of Lieutenant Blagg, was granted £70 'to enable her to get into some way of business for the support of herself and child without making any further applications for relief to the Company.'

[5] Burke's 'Commoners.' [6] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1766, p. 390.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEFEAT AND DEATH OF SHAUKAT JANG.

'Two young men, equally proud, equally incapable, equally cruel.'—GHULAM HUSAIN KHAN.[1]

WE left Sirāj-uddaula master of Calcutta and Fort William. He had destroyed Government House to punish Mr. Drake, to whom it did not belong; he had ordered the erection of a mosque, and had renamed the town Alinagar. To the great disgust of his officers, he appointed as Governor one of his favourites named Mānik Chand, a Hindu who had been *Dīwān* of the Raja of Burdwan, and who now held the farm of many of the estates upon the Ganges. In the 'Seir Mutaqherin' he is described as

'a man presumptuous, arrogant, destitute of capacity, and wholly without courage.'[2]

As regards the last-mentioned charge, he had shown extraordinary cowardice in Orissa,[3] and his appointment was therefore considered an insult to Sirāj-uddaula's other generals; but it has been already pointed out that the policy of the Bengal Nawabs was to place their own creatures, and especially Hindus, in all positions where a man of capacity might acquire a dangerous independence, as would certainly have been the case in Calcutta if an ambitious military Governor had made a bid for the support of the Europeans. On the other hand, it might have been thought that a strong man was necessary at Calcutta to thwart any attempt of the British to retake the town; but Sirāj-uddaula, owing to his unexpectedly easy success, had passed from fear of the Europeans to an overweening confidence in his own power. Scrafton says:

'It may appear matter of wonder why the *Soubah* permitted us to remain so quietly at Fulta till we were become formidable to him, which I can only account

[1] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 189. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 192. [3] *Ibid.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

for from his mean opinion of us, as he had been frequently heard to say he did not imagine there was ten thousand men in all Frenghistan, meaning Europe, and had no idea of our attempting to return by force.'[1]

And M. Jean Law says:

'Siraj-uddaula had the most extravagant contempt for Europeans; a pair of slippers, said he, is all that is needed to govern them. Their number, according to him, could not in all Europe come up to more than ten or twelve thousand men. What fear, then, could he have of the English nation, which assuredly could not present to his mind more than a quarter of the whole? He was, therefore, very far from thinking that the English could entertain the idea of re-establishing themselves by force. To humiliate themselves—to offer money with one hand, and receive joyously with the other his permission to re-establish themselves—was the whole project which he could naturally suppose them to have formed. It is to this idea, without doubt, that the tranquillity in which he left them at Fulta is due.'[2]

Besides, the British found means to have it suggested to the Nawab that they were waiting at Fulta only until favourable weather allowed them to set out for Madras,[3] and Mānik Chand, whose tenants owned the country round Fulta,[4] was probably not averse to the harvest which the stay of the British brought into his tenants' hands, and so encouraged the impression the British wished to produce.

At first the French[5] and Dutch,[6] though they were distressed at the disgrace which had fallen upon the European name, were not altogether sorry at the misfortunes of their great commercial rival; and whilst they behaved with great kindness to the refugees, they thought that the expulsion of the British meant increased commercial prosperity for themselves. They were soon to be undeceived.

On the 24th June the Nawab left Calcutta, and arrived at Hugli on the 25th.[7] He surrounded the town with his forces, and sent word to Mr. Bisdom, and also to M. Renault at Chandernagore, to pay him a large contribution under penalty of having their flagstaffs cut down and their fortifications destroyed. From the Dutch he demanded 20 *lakhs* of rupees. Rather than pay this exorbitant demand they threatened to leave the country, but after

24th-25th June, 1756.

[1] 'Reflections,' p. 58.
[2] Vol. III., p. 176.
[3] Vol. I., p. 301, and Vol. II., p. 164.
[4] Vol. I., p. 301.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 212.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 55, and Vol. II., p. 79.
[7] Vol. I., p. 33.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

a time, by the intercession of Coja Wājid, it was reduced to 4½ *lakhs*,[1] which sum included the *nazarānah*, or complimentary present due on the Nawab's accession, and also a reward to Coja Wājid for his friendly offices.[2] This was advanced by the Seṭhs at the extremely moderate rate of 9 per cent. per annum.[3]

The French, after some rather delicate negotiations, in which the two parties nearly came to blows, were let off with the smaller fine of 3½ *lakhs*, and the lesser nations had all to pay proportionate fines—the Danes 25,000 rupees, the Portuguese and the Emdeners 5,000 each.[4] The French had, unluckily for themselves, recently received a supply of money from home for trade purposes by the ship *Saint Contest*, practically the whole of which was taken by the Nawab.[5] They ascribed the fact that they were let off with a smaller fine than the Dutch to the greater wealth of the latter; the British imputed it to the assistance which they believed the French had given the Nawab.

'It was understood that the favour shown them [the French] in comparison with the Dutch after the destruction of our Settlements, when he affected to fine both nations for augmenting the works about their respective Factories, was in consideration of their having secretly furnished artillery when he marched against Calcutta. This was a suspicion in the Indies, and as such only is mentioned; but it is very certain that the letters wrote home to Europe were entirely in Suraja Dowlet's favour, containing a very unfair and, which was much worse, a very plausible, but utterly false, representation of the grounds of the quarrel, which was published to our prejudice in all the foreign gazettes.'[6]

Mr. Watts' second accusation has much more semblance of truth than the former, but the considerations which brought about the fall of Chandernagore were rather national than particular, so we need not dwell further upon this question.

It is argued that if the Nawab had really intended to carry out the supposed policy of his grandfather—namely, to reduce the British, French, and Dutch to the position of the Armenians—he

[1] Another account says 5 *lakhs* (Vol. II., p. 79).

[2] Vol. I., pp. 28, 304.

[3] Vol. I., p. 32.

[4] Vol. II., p. 79.

[5] This is Renault's own account (Vol. III., p. 253), and probably more correct than Holwell's statement that Rāi Durlabh stood security for them (Vol. II., p. 17).

[6] Watts' 'Memoir of the Revolution,' p. 29. See also 'Translations from Continental Papers,' Vol. III., p. 116 *et seq.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

should now have destroyed the fortifications at Chandernagore and Chinsurah; but either he had never had any intention of carrying out this policy, or, with the instability of character natural to a man of his temperament, he had changed his mind. Probably also he was now convinced that the formidable nature of these fortifications had been exaggerated, and thought that Chandernagore and Chinsurah, lying ready to his hand whenever he chose to take them, he was more likely to benefit his exchequer by putting them to ransom than by expelling their inhabitants, in which latter case the booty was certain to fall into the hands of the native soldiers rather than into his own. Other reasons have been mentioned by various persons for his desire to get back to Murshidabad—*e.g.*, that the *Wazīr* of the Emperor was again threatening an attack, and that his presence at the capital was needed to hold the Nawab of Purneah in check. The former was only a rumour, and the latter is improbable, as during the Rains no military operations could be undertaken in Purneah.

Sirāj-uddaula now set free Messrs. Watts and Collet, who arrived in Chandernagore on the 28th June,[1] delighted to exchange the ill-treatment of the Nawab's officers for the hospitality of the French. With them he sent orders to M. Renault to see that they were safely despatched to Madras,[2] and he wrote a semi-apologetic letter to Mr. Pigot, the Chief of that Settlement.[3] After this, having received the Dutch Chief and Second in *Darbār*,[4] he marched slowly to Murshidabad, where he arrived on the 11th July, declaring pompously that he had punished the British for their insolence, and made the French and Dutch pay the expenses of the expedition.[5] To the Emperor at Delhi he wrote letters boasting of 28th June, 1756.

> the most glorious atchievement that had been performed in Indostan since the days of Tamerlane.'[6]

The French and Dutch at Cossimbazar now felt the full effects of the misfortune which had befallen the Europeans in the destruction of their leading Settlement. The Nawab called upon them to buy up the goods belonging to the British, but knowing

[1] Vol. I., p. 48. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 196. [3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 55. [5] Vol. III., p. 172. [6] Orme MSS., India II., p. 79

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

better than he what might be expected in the not distant future, they refused to do so, and Mr. Bisdom even went so far as to prohibit the private inhabitants of Chinsurah from doing anything which might involve them in a quarrel with the British. He could at that distance act boldly, but the Europeans at Cossimbazar had to show more circumspection when they saw

11th July, 1756. 'the tyrant reappear in triumph at Murshidabad, little thinking of the punishment which Providence was preparing for his crimes, and to make which still more striking he was yet to have some further successes.'[1]

Sirāj-uddaula now gave full vent to his violence and greed, and all the inhabitants of Murshidabad, natives and Europeans alike, were delighted when they heard that his cousin, Shaukat Jang, had resumed his rebellious attitude. Shaukat Jang had been secretly intriguing at Delhi, and had obtained a *farmān* from the *Wazīr* appointing him Nawab of Bengal. Popular opinion was in his favour; but Ghulām Husain Khān, who was at his Court, represents him as a madman, who was accustomed to stupefy himself with drugs, and who boasted that he would not limit himself to the conquest of Bengal, but would place a new Emperor on the throne of Delhi, and then, conquering everything before him, proceed to Candahar and Khorassan, where, he said,

'I intend to take up my residence, as the climate of Bengal does not suit my state of health.'[2]

As a preliminary to this magnificent scheme he dismissed the old officers of his army with such indignities that he nearly drove the latter into mutiny, and though this was avoided by the disgrace of his favourite, Habīb Beg, who had instigated his excesses, the Prince and his remaining officers thoroughly distrusted each other. One of his Hindu officers, named Lāla, whom he had with difficulty been restrained from flogging, had taken refuge at Murshidabad, and Sirāj-uddaula, alarmed at what he heard from him and others, now determined to test the exact state of affairs. Accordingly, he sent one of his courtiers, named Rās Bihārī, to take charge of certain *faujdārīs* in Purneah. Shaukat Jang gave him a very rough reception, and sent him back with a verbal message that he

[1] Vol. III., p. 172. [2] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 197.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

intended to assume the *Sūbahdārī* of Bengal, but would spare his cousin's life on account of their relationship, and would permit him to retire to Dacca and there live as a private person.[1] Sirāj-uddaula immediately resolved on war, and collected his army towards the beginning of October. His own violence, however, made matters difficult for him. It is said that he slapped Jagat Seth in the face in open *Darbār*, and then imprisoned him.[2] Mīr Jafar and other officers refused to march until this wrong had been redressed, and Jagat Seth was set free; but the army was in a dangerous temper.[3] To protect himself against a possible outbreak Sirāj-uddaula had summoned his deputy at Patna, the Hindu Rāmnarāin, to his assistance. The malcontents hoped that Rāmnarāin would not come, but he obeyed the Nawab's summons, and all they could now hope for was that some accident might happen to the Nawab during the course of the campaign. It was short and decisive. The rival armies met not very far from Rajmahal.[4] The fighting began on the 16th October, and Shaukat Jang charging a body of troops, in the midst of which he thought he saw his cousin, was shot dead on the spot.[5] His army immediately gave way, and the whole Province of Purneah submitted without further resistance.[6] Two officers, Dīn Muhammad and Ghulām Shāh, who claimed rewards on the ground that it was their men who had killed Shaukat Jang, were banished by Sirāj-uddaula. The latter asserted that he had ordered his cousin to be taken alive, that he might pardon him and make him his friend.[7]

16th October, 1756.

Sirāj-uddaula had obtained some inkling of the ill-feeling against him, and so remained a few miles in the rear of his army, to which he sent various of his friends, including his cousin Mīrān, son of Mīr Jafar, dressed like himself. It was this precaution which caused Shaukat Jang's wild charge and death,

[1] It was probably the recollection of this offer which made Sirāj-uddaula, after his capture, hope that Mīr Jafar would treat him in the same manner.

[2] Secret Committee Consultations at Fulta, 5 September, 1756.

[3] Vol. III., p. 174.

[4] Mr. Long says at Baldiabari, near Nawabganj, in Pargana Kankjol.

[5] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 213. Vol. II., p. 53, and Scrafton, p. 51.

[6] For an absolutely incorrect account of the fighting in Purneah, see Vol. II., p. 55.

[7] Vol., II. p. 69.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and the Nawab thought that the success of his device proved that he was the favourite child of Fortune. He returned to Murshidabad in triumph, and there received the Emperor's *farmān* confirming him as Nawab of Bengal. This cost him, it is said, 2 *kror*, 2 *lakhs*, and 50,000 rupees,[1] but its arrival at this moment confirmed him in his erroneous belief.

At Murshidabad, Mr. Surgeon Forth tells us, Sirāj-uddaula now took an account of his wealth, which amounted to 68 *krors* of rupees exclusive of his jewels.[2] This, according to the exchange of the time, which was 2s. 6d. to the rupee, would be £85,000,000. Other accounts put his wealth at the somewhat more modest sum of £40,000,000.

Nothing further of importance happened at Murshidabad until news arrived of the reinforcements which the British had received from Madras, and the Europeans had to submit with what equanimity they could to the insults they received daily.

'It can be guessed what we had to suffer, we and the Dutch, at Cossimbazar. There were continual demands on demands, insults on insults, on the part of the officers and soldiers of the country, who, forming their behaviour on that of their master, thought they could not sufficiently show their contempt for everything which was European. We could not even go out of our grounds without being exposed to some annoyance.'[3]

Yet in the midst of all this triumph Sirāj-uddaula did not know that Shaukat Jang had more than avenged his own death.

'The rash valour of the young Nawab of Purneah, in delivering Siraj-uddaula from the only enemy he had to fear in the country, made it clear to all Bengal that the English were the only Power which could bring about the change that everyone was longing for.'[4]

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[1] Vol. II., p. 53, and 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 197.
[2] Vol. II., p. 53. [3] Vol. III., p. 175. [4] Vol. III., p. 174.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER IX.

THE STAY AT FULTA.

'The climate was more fatal in India than the enemy.'[1]

WE have no connected account of the life of the refugees at Fulta, and the following disconnected fragments of information are all that I have been able to collect on the subject:

Mr. Drake and the fleet arrived at Fulta on the 26th June. They had written the previous day to the Dutch for assistance in provisions and marine stores, but though a certain amount was given them secretly, help was at first formally refused, and it was not until the 20th July that the Dutch Council decided to supply the British, on the ground 26th June, 1756.

'that the French were the inveterate enemies of the English.'[2]

The artist William Hodges tells us that Mr. Robert Gregory (afterwards a person of wealth and distinction in England) was the messenger chosen to be sent up to the French and Dutch. Under cover of a storm he succeeded in passing Tanna and Calcutta unnoticed by the Moors. The French politely refused any assistance, but Mr. Bisdom sent down a Dutch vessel under Captain Van Staten laden with all kinds of provisions. At that very time Mr. Bisdom's own house was so filled with refugees from Calcutta that he and his wife were compelled to sleep on board a *bajrā*[3] on the river.[4]

Meanwhile, the condition of the British at Fulta was most miserable.

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[1] Vol. III., p. 94.

[2] Vol. I., pp. 25, 37, 306.

[3] Indian house-boat.

[4] 'Travels in India, 1780-1783,' p. 19 note.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

'For some time no provisions could be procured, but as soon as the Nabob's army left Calcutta the country people ventured to supply them.

'The want of convenient shelter, as well as the dread of being surprized, obliged them all to sleep on board the vessels, which were so crowded that all lay promiscuously on the decks, without shelter from the rains of the season, and for some time without a change of raiment, for none had brought any store away, and these hardships, inconsiderable as they may seem, were grievous to persons of whom the greatest part had lived many years in the gentle ease of India.[1] Sickness likewise increased their sufferings, for the lower part of Bengal between the two arms of the Ganges[2] is the most unhealthy country in the world, and many died of a malignant fever which infected all the vessels.[3] But instead of alleviating their distresses by that spirit of mutual goodwill which is supposed to prevail amongst companions in misery, everyone turned his mind to invidious discussions of the causes which had produced their misfortune. All seemed to expect a day when they should be restored to Calcutta. The younger men in the Company's service, who had not held any post in the Government, endeavoured to fix every kind of blame on their superiors, whom they wished to see removed from their stations, to which they expected to succeed. At the same time the Members of Council accused one another, and these examples gave rise to the same spirit of invective amongst those who could derive no benefit from such declamations.'[4]

As the fugitives seemed at first to think of nothing but quarrelling with each other, it is difficult to understand why they stayed at Fulta. Holwell asserted that they thought it advisable to wait until one of their number had been sent forward to Madras to explain their conduct in a favourable light,[5] but Drake explains that they had no provisions for the voyage at first, and when with great difficulty they were at last procured, Major Killpatrick arrived with a small reinforcement and promises of further assistance, which, if it had come a little earlier, would have enabled them to recapture Calcutta. The news of their restoration would then have arrived as early as the news of the disaster, and so have obviated any chance of a commercial panic in London.[6]

Whatever their reasons may have been, they determined to stay

[1] The condition of the rest may be judged by that of the Governor himself (Vol. II., p. 144).

[2] The branches known as the rivers Hugli and Ganges.

[3] 'About two-thirds of the men died of fluxes and fevers. The European ladies held out best of all, for few or none of them died, which was surprising, as they scarce had cloathes to wear' (Vol. III., p. 87).

[4] Orme MSS., O.V., 66, p. 96.

[5] Vol. II., p. 44.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

at Fulta, and took a number of ships into the Company's service, amongst which were the *Doddalay*, *Speedwell*, *Lively*, *Nancy*, and *Fort William*. On the last mentioned Mr. Drake, with an almost impudent lack of humour, took up his abode. The natives[1] in the neighbourhood soon began to send in provisions, and the Council at first provided the Europeans with food, but later on made them a diet allowance of 50 rupees a month.[2]

Within the first week in July the refugees from Jagdea and Balasore safely rejoined the fleet at Fulta,[3] and the members of Council then present determined to open negotiations with the Nawab for their restoration, so as to conceal their real reasons for staying at Fulta. Accordingly, they wrote to Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore, forwarding copies of a letter which was to be translated and delivered to Mānik Chand, Rāi Durlabh, Ghulām Husain Khān, Coja Wājid, the Seths, and any other men of influence at the *Darbār* who might be likely to be useful.[4] Messrs. Watts and Collet replied on the 8th, refusing to acknowledge the authority of Mr. Drake and the other Members of Council as still in office, and declining to deliver the letter which had been sent them. Ultimately, however, they consented to do the latter.[5] The letters were shown by Mr. Bisdom to Coja Wājid, who replied that it was useless for the British to expect permission from the Nawab to trade on any conditions better than those allowed to the Portuguese and Armenians, and that the only way to recover Calcutta was by force.[6] July, 1756.

The protest of Messrs. Watts and Collet had compelled Mr. Drake and his companions to reconsider their position. It seemed impossible to style themselves the Council of Fort William, though with Messrs. Amyatt and Boddam they formed the majority of that body. Accordingly, they reorganized themselves under the title of 'The Agents for the Honourable Company's Affairs,' and under that denomination they issued a notification to all the Com-

[1] Vol. I., p. 171. The descendants of Raja Naba Krishna say that he had relatives near Fulta, whom he persuaded to assist the British (see Verelst's 'View of the Rise, Fall, and Present State of the English Government in Bengal,' p. 28 note).

[2] Vol. I., p. 300.

[3] See letter signed by Amyatt and Boddam (Vol. I., p. 58).

[4] Vol. I., p. 57. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 98. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

pany's servants at Fulta that they were still in the Company's service, and might draw diet money and salary as usual.[1]

Meanwhile, though they had despatched *pattamārs*, or native messengers, by land to Fort St. George, they had not been able to send any persons of rank to explain their position to the Madras Council. The envoys first chosen were Captain Grant and the Rev. Robert Mapletoft,[2] but the latter died. The former also had been ill, and, presumably, it was considered on second thoughts that Captain Grant, as senior military officer and a man of ability and courage, though at present under a cloud owing to his desertion of the Fort, could not well be spared. Gradually a rumour spread that the Council now intended to send either Mr. Manningham or Mr. Frankland, and on the 10th July a protest signed by almost all the Europeans at Fulta was presented to Mr. Drake against either of these gentlemen being sent to give an account of matters

'which, as they absented themselves, they must know very little of.'[3]

13th July, 1756. Mr. Drake promised that neither of them should be sent, but on the 13th July Council decided to depute Mr. Manningham and the French officer, M. Lebeaume, to give an account of the loss of Calcutta, to ask for reinforcements, and to request that information of the loss of Calcutta should not be sent to England until the Madras authorities could at the same time inform the Directors of the probability of its speedy recapture.[4] This would, of course, be calculated to soften the view taken by the Directors of the behaviour of Mr. Drake and his companions, but the suggestion was fully justified by the commercial advantages it would secure to the Company.

14th July, 1756. His being intrusted with this mission suggested to Mr. Manningham an excellent means of extracting from the other members of Council a condonation of his questionable behaviour at Calcutta. Accordingly, on the 14th July he and Mr. Frankland presented to Council a justification of their action in going on board the ships on the night of the 18th June, and staying there in spite of all orders to return to the fort. As a matter of course, the other members accepted the explanation unanimously.[5]

[1] Vol. I., pp. 98, 186. [2] Vol. III., p. 383. [3] Vol. I., p. 66.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 73. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 244

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Having thus secured himself, Mr. Manningham embarked with Lieutenant Lebeaume on board the *Syren*. She arrived at Vizagapatam on the 12th August, and the letter they brought from the Council was taken on by Lieutenant Lebeaume by land next day.[1]

Meanwhile the Council's first letters regarding the outbreak of hostilities in Bengal had arrived at Madras on the 13th July, and on the 14th it was hurriedly determined to send up Major Killpatrick with 200 troops.[2] This officer was about to return to England on account of ill-health,[3] but gave up his intention at the sudden call to active service. On the afternoon of the 21st he embarked on the *Delaware* (Captain Winter), and arrived at Culpee on the 28th July.[4] On the 30th or 31st he went up to Fulta with a few men, the rest following shortly after. He was immediately requested to take his seat in Council. Between the 30th July and the 13th August all the other members of Council who remained alive—*viz.*, Messrs. Watts, Collet, Pearkes, and Holwell—had also arrived at Fulta.[5] 13th-14th July, 1756.

The smallness of the reinforcement sent with Killpatrick, and the want of guns and ammunition, made any offensive action impossible, but it rendered the position of the British more secure for the moment. On the 5th August Major Killpatrick wrote to Madras very dolefully of the situation in which he found himself, laying special stress upon the probability of sickness amongst the troops. His fears were soon realized, for on the 7th the sickness was so great that it was determined to fit out one of the ships as a hospital; but so powerful was the spirit of procrastination that it was not until the 23rd September that the *Success* galley was fixed on for this purpose.[6] 5th August, 1756.

On the 12th August Mr. Holwell arrived from Hugli, and immediately entered a strong protest in Council against the pretensions of Messrs. Drake, Frankland, Manningham, and Macket to retain their authority, but he met with no support from his 12th August, 1756.

[1] Vol. I., pp. 195, 213. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 99.

[3] His health broke down after Plassey, and he died on the 10th October, 1757 (Letter to Court, 10 January, 1758, paragraph 133).

[4] Vol. I., p. 192, and Vol. III., p. 19.

[5] Extracts of events at Fulta (India Office, Correspondence Memoranda, 1757).

[6] Vol. III., p. 22.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

fellow Members, and was persuaded to attend the Councils of the Agency.[1] This concession seems to have put an end to all the quarrelling, and even the name of the Agency seems to have been gradually dropped.

Apparently the arrival of the *Delaware* had encouraged the British to take provisions by force when they could not obtain what they wanted for payment, but on the 14th the Dutch Fiscal, Van Schevichaven, promising a supply, orders were given that no foraging parties should be sent ashore.

20th August, 1756. On the 20th August Captain Grant, who had been very ill,[2] submitted a letter to Council explaining his reasons for accompanying Mr. Drake on board on the 19th June. Council accepted his explanation, Mr. Pearkes alone protesting that though Grant's previous behaviour had been uniformly honourable, he—*i.e.*, Mr. Pearkes—thought he should not be allowed to resume his rank until he had earned his restoration by some conspicuous act of skill or courage.[3]

At this time the Council meetings were held on board the *Fort William*, the Governor's residence. He was now treated with the respect due to his rank, and even received a salute of guns when he dined on board the other ships.[4] The Council, however, found it very difficult to preserve any secrecy as to their intentions, and accordingly they appointed a Secret Committee, consisting of Messrs. Drake, Watts, Killpatrick, and Holwell,

> 'for the better despatch of affairs of the country, and for the receiving of intelligence and advice.'[5]

22nd August, 1756. This Committee held its first meeting on the 22nd August on the *Phœnix* schooner, and it continued to hold its sittings on board that vessel until the 15th September, when it transferred its meeting-place to the *Grampus* sloop. Even before its first formal meeting the Secret Committee began proceedings by writing to Fort St. George to request that all matters connected with the attempt to regain Calcutta should be communicated to them alone.[6] To deceive the Nawab, who might be supposed to have

[1] Vol. I., p. 203 note.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 200.
[4] Vol. III., p. 20.
[5] Secret Committee Consultations, 22nd August, 1756.
[6] Vol. I., p. 198.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

been alarmed at the news of his arrival, Major Killpatrick had already been instructed on the 15th to write and assure him that the British did not bear malice for what had happened in the past, and to ask for a supply of provisions. This letter was ultimately sent to Mr. Hastings, who was still at Cossimbazar, for delivery. At the same time letters from Omichand to the Major were brought by an Armenian, Coja Petrus, and a Jew named Abraham Jacobs,[1] advising him to write to Mānik Chand, Coja Wājid, Jagat Seth, and Rāi Durlabh,[2] which he did immediately.

On the 26th August Mr. Becher and the other gentlemen arrived from Dacca,[3] and Mr. Becher was admitted to the Secret Committee. 26th August, 1756.

In spite of the negotiations, or, perhaps, because of them, Mānik Chand was beginning to take fright. On the 31st August news was received at Fulta that he was preparing boats to fire the fleet and a force to occupy Budge Budge. Mr. Gregory, whose adventurous journey to Chinsurah has been already mentioned, informed the Committee that the Nawab was trying to force the Dutch to buy the plunder taken from the British. He was requested to remain at Chinsurah to watch the Moors. Mr. Forth was also deputed to procure intelligence, and Mr. Warren Hastings to continue at Cossimbazar for the same purpose. 31st August, 1756.

The letters sent by Petrus and Jacobs to Mānik Chand quickly bore fruit, and on the 5th September the Committee received from him a *parwāna* or order ordering the opening of a *bazar* for the sale of provisions. Omichand did not deliver the letters addressed to the other notables, nor Mr. Hastings that addressed to the Nawab, as there were already signs of trouble at Murshidabad, and it was hoped they might prove unnecessary.[4] 5th September, 1756.

On the 17th September Council decided it was not a proper time to think of seizing Moor goods in foreign bottoms, but determined to detain any that might be found in British ships.[5] 17th September, 1756.

[1] Vol. III., p. 364.

[2] Secret Committee Proceedings, 22nd August, 1756.

[3] Vol. III., p. 20.

[4] Secret Committee Proceedings, 5th September, 1756.

[5] Extracts from Fulta Proceedings (India Office, Correspondence Memoranda, 1757).

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The same day they were informed by Mr. Hastings that the Nawab of Purneah had received a *farmān* from Delhi appointing him Nawab of Bengal, and that war between him and Sirāj-uddaula was at last certain.[1]

It now occurred to the Council that, in accordance with the terms of the Company's Charter,[2] they might formalize their position by taking advantage of the fact that they still retained the Factory of Bulramgurry, and on the 18th September Messrs. Holwell and Boddam were sent there to take possession.[3] This was actually done on the 25th October, when that Factory was formally declared the seat of the Presidency.[4]

18th September, 1756.

For the next few days the news from Murshidabad regarding the Nawab was very conflicting. There were rumours of quarrels with Jagat Seth and the officers on the one hand, and rumours that he had received a *farmān* from the Emperor on the other. He seemed to have no time to attend to the British, but had ordered Mānik Chand to deal with them.[5] Mānik Chand was called to Murshidabad, but excused himself on account of his apprehensions of the British. He seemed, however, to be in no hurry to settle their affairs, and on the 7th October temporarily closed the *bazar* he had sanctioned at Fulta in consequence of a petty quarrel between the sailors and the native boatmen.

7th October, 1756.

About the 9th or 10th October Mr. Hastings was forced to leave Cossimbazar, and came down to Chinsurah. This rendered the news from Murshidabad still more uncertain.

9th-10th October, 1756.

On the 13th Council[6] wrote to Fort St. George saying they had received no reply to their request for assistance, and that the Moors were beginning to doubt their assurance that they were only waiting for better weather to quit the Ganges, and were beginning to put difficulties in the way of their getting provisions.

13th October, 1756.

At last on the 23rd October the *Kingfisher* sloop arrived in the Hugli with intelligence that Watson and Clive were leaving Madras with strong reinforcements. This joyful news put heart into everyone, and on the 24th the British flag was hoisted at

23rd-24th October, 1756.

[1] Vol. I., p. 219.
[2] Vol. II., p. 192.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 192.
[5] Secret Committee Proceedings, 30th September, 1756.
[6] Vol. I., pp. 237, 301.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Fulta, just outside the Dutch bounds,[1] whilst to be ready for all contingencies a copy of the Company's *Farmān* which Mr. Frankland happened to have in his possession was translated into Persian, and Petrus bribed the *Kāzī* at Hugli to affix to it the Imperial Seal.[2]

The good news from Madras was counterbalanced by a letter from Omichand received on the 27th announcing that the Nawab had defeated and killed his cousin, Shaukat Jang. However, this had put the Nawab into a good humour, and he had written in favourable terms regarding the British to Mānik Chand; but the latter had been informed of their rejoicings, and on the 30th the Committee heard he was preparing to send troops to Budge Budge in order to surprise them.[3] 27th October, 1756.

Mr. Drake thought this critical moment a favourable opportunity in which to settle his private troubles, and on the 31st October he asked for an order to be minuted directing all Members of Council to deliver in their complaints against him in the course of a month,[4] and at the same time placarded 31st October, 1756.

'at every ship's mast at Fulta, and at the most publick place ashore,'

an advertisement asking anyone who had a complaint against him to send it in in writing.[5]

On the 3rd November the Nawab heard that the French were resuming the fortification of Chandernagore, and wrote to the Dutch asking them to assist him in expelling them, as he had expelled the British.[6] 3rd November, 1756.

On the 6th Major Killpatrick received a letter from Mānik Chand asking him to say definitely whether the British intended to fight, and a week later Council heard that the Nawab had sent orders to prepare magazines at Tribeni and Hugli, and intended to come down with his army to Calcutta. Meanwhile troops were collecting at Budge Budge, and on the 18th the British expected to be attacked, but the scare proved to be groundless. At the same time it was clear that the Nawab was suspicious, as he had forbidden the Dutch to assist the British, and Coja Wājid 6th November, 1756. 18th November, 1756.

[1] Vol. I., p. 299, and Vol. III., p. 22.
[2] Vol. III., p. 365.
[3] Secret Committee Proceedings, 30th October, 1756.
[4] Vol. II., p. 134. For Drake's reply to these complaints, see Vol. II., pp. 134-157.
[5] Vol. II., p. 134.
[6] Vol. II., p. 18.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

had had a long conference with M. Renault, it was supposed, to secure his assistance for the Nawab. It was necessary for the
2nd December, 1756. British to have correct information, and on the 2nd December Mr. Surgeon Forth was ordered to proceed to Murshidabad. He found it impossible to obey this order, for the natives were so sus-
8th December, 1756. picious that on the 8th December the *Faujdār* at Hugli stopped the Dutch trade,[1] under pretence that they were secretly assisting the
10th December, 1756. British.[2] On the 10th M. Renault informed the *Faujdār* of the arrival of a British squadron,[3] which news was confirmed by Mānik Chand on the 11th[4] ordering the *Faujdār* to proceed to Tanna, whilst he himself marched to Budge Budge, and immediately afterwards prepared ships to be sunk at Tanna in case the British advanced.[5] No one was allowed to pass up or down the river.[6] The native inhabitants began to leave Calcutta with their plunder and flock to Hugli, but this only frightened the inhabitants of that city, and many of them fled into the interior.[7]

Mānik Chand's preparations were somewhat in advance of facts, but they show how good was his intelligence, for the *Protector* had been signalled at Kedgeree on the 10th,[8] though it was not
12th December, 1756. until the 12th that she arrived at Fulta. She brought news that Watson's squadron had sailed from Madras two days before she left that town. Watson himself arrived on the *Kent* the same day, and was speedily joined by the *Tyger*, *Salisbury*, *Bridgewater*, and *Walpole*.

The last-mentioned ship, an Indiaman, brought orders from the Court of Directors creating a Select Secret Committee

> 'for managing all matters regarding the said Company's possessions, rights, and privileges in these provinces.'

15th December, 1756. It was to consist of Messrs. Drake, Watts, Becher, and Manningham. The Select Committee met for the first time on the 15th December, and asked Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive to join them. The former attended the sittings on various occasions, but was never actually a member of the Committee. As Mr. Manningham was absent in Madras, Mr. Holwell was appointed to act

[1] Vol. II., p. 52. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 72. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 69. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 73. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 81. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[8] Secret Committee Proceedings, 10th December, 1756.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

as his substitute.[1] He took his seat on the 22nd at a meeting held on board the *Kent*. Mr. John Cooke was appointed Secretary.

This was the origin of the celebrated Select Committee which carried out all the Revolutions that gave Bengal to the British. It superseded the old Fulta Secret Committee, and in later years developed into what is now known as the Foreign Department.

[1] Vol. II., p. 188.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER X.

THE ACTION OF THE MADRAS COUNCIL.[1]

'We drained all the garrisons upon the Coast to strengthen the detachment preparing for Bengal, and to secure to the utmost of our power a speedy success to our designs.'—SELECT COMMITTEE, FORT ST. GEORGE.[2]

'We think our unhappy situation deserved a very different treatment.'—SELECT COMMITTEE, FORT WILLIAM.[3]

I HAVE already mentioned that on the first outbreak of disturbances the Council at Fort William wrote to Madras for reinforcements. In reply to their letters of the 25th May and 4th June, Colonel Lawrence's offer to go to Bengal having been declined owing to the bad state of his health, Major Killpatrick was despatched with a small reinforcement, which was so rapidly diminished by sickness that, having arrived at Fulta on the 31st July, he wrote on the 17th September to Colonel Adlercron that he had already lost thirty-two officers and men.[4]

3rd August, 1756. On the 3rd August letters were received from Mr. Drake announcing the loss of Cossimbazar, and asking for reinforcements and military stores. Admiral Watson was immediately requested to send the *Bridgewater* (Captain Smith) to Bengal with 150 men, stores and money, and on the 14th August Council decided to despatch a still larger detachment.

17th August, 1756. On the 17th August[5] Mr. Pigot informed his Council that he had heard the previous day from Messrs. Watts and Collet of the capture of Calcutta. The affair had now become so serious that

[1] The contents of this chapter are taken chiefly from the Proceedings of the Council and Select Committee of Fort St. George, which were, of course, too bulky to include in the Selection.

[2] Vol. II., p. 233.

[3] Vol. II., p. 94.

[4] Letter from Colonel Adlercron to the Right Hon. Henry Fox, dated 21 November, 1756 (India Office, Home Series, Misc., 94).

[5] Vol. I., p. 195.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

J. Hudson pinx.
E. Fisher fecit
Charles Watson Esq. VICE-ADMIRAL of the White

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the orders of the 14th to send reinforcements were suspended, and it was decided to consult Admiral Watson. Next day Admirals Watson and Pocock attended Council by special request, and offered to place the squadron at their disposal. On the 19th Colonel Adlercron, of the 39th Regiment, attended Council, and immediately began a long and fruitless correspondence as to the terms upon which he would allow his regiment, or a part of it, to go to Bengal.

The Admiral being again consulted, Council suggested that a small force only should be sent merely to recapture Calcutta, but the Admiral advised the delay of any expedition until the end of September, so that the troops might escape the Rainy season. As he said,

'if the ships were to go now one third of the men would fall sick before there would be an opportunity of their doing any service."[1]

Colonel Clive, who had been absent at Fort St. David,[2] returned to Madras on the 24th, and took his seat in Council. It appears that he volunteered to command the expedition to Bengal as soon as he heard of it.[3] 24th August, 1756.

On the 29th a letter, dated 13th July, was received from the Bengal Council announcing the despatch of Messrs. Manningham and Lebeaume. After a long discussion it was determined to acknowledge the Council of Fort William as still retaining its authority, in spite of the loss of Calcutta, but to put off the expedition to Bengal until the arrival of the India ships expected from England, as it was hoped they would bring news of the state of affairs in Europe, where war with France was daily looked for. It was thought that they would not reach Madras before the end of September, so that, whilst accepting the delay advised by the Admiral, Council would also be better able to see how many men could be spared. It ought to be noted that the French were very strong in Southern India, and there was no probability of their observing neutrality if war broke out in Europe; thus the Council of Fort St. George showed great moral courage in denuding their Settlements of a great part of their forces in order to recover Bengal.[4] 29th August, 1756.

[1] Vol. I., p. 206.

[2] He was Deputy-Governor of this town, and was to succeed Mr. Pigot at Madras (Vol. III., p. 307).

[3] Mr. Pigot also offered to go himself.

[4] Vol. II., pp. 233-235.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

6th September, 1756. On the 6th September M. Lebeaume arrived with a letter from Mr. Manningham to say that the latter had halted at Vizagapatam owing to the difficulty of travelling in the Rains and the impossibility of procuring palanquin bearers.[1] A sum of money was given him to provide himself with necessaries, but it was thought unwise to admit a Frenchman to their counsels, accordingly after delivering his message he was not further consulted.

19th-21st September, 1756. The Company's ships *Chesterfield* (Captain Edwin Carter) and *Walpole* (Captain Francis Fowler) arrived from England on the 19th of September. They brought no news of the actual outbreak of war, and so on the 21st it was decided to proceed with the expedition to Bengal; but as the authorities in Madras wished to retain the power of recalling their troops in case of necessity, they resolved to place the expedition under the command of one of their own officers, and not under Colonel Adlercron. Mr. Pigot and Colonel Clive had both offered their services. It was impossible, however, for both Mr. Pigot and Colonel Clive to leave Madras, and the former could not well go now that the Madras authorities had acknowledged the continued existence of the Fort William Council. Accordingly, Colonel Clive was chosen for the duty. He was a Company's officer, but held a commission as Lieutenant-Colonel from the King,[2] which enabled him to take the command of such of the King's troops as might be sent with him. It was also decided that a member of the Council and Mr. Walsh should accompany him as Deputies from the Madras Council, and form a committee to decide upon the measures to be taken in Bengal and as to whether the troops should stay there, or return to Madras after the re-establishment of the British.

22nd September, 1756. On the 22nd September Mr. Pigot informed Council that the letters brought by the *Walpole* and *Chesterfield* contained orders, dated 13th February, 1756, from the Court of Directors appointing Select Committees in Bengal and Madras for the management of all affairs of war and diplomacy. Accordingly, the management of the Bengal expedition was handed over to the Select Committee.[3] The Council had intended that the expedition should consist of

[1] Vol. I., p. 213. [2] Vol. III., p. 307.

[3] In their Proceedings of the 22nd September the Committee explained that previous to these orders, they had not fully understood the nature of their duties.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

600 men and a company of artillery under Captain Hislop, but the Select Committee, as we shall see, proceeded to increase the number very considerably.

On the 23rd September the Select Committee confirmed Colonel Clive's appointment, in spite of representations from Colonel Adlercron. 23rd September, 1756.

Mr. Manningham arrived at last from Vizagapatam on the 29th September, and the Select Committee having discussed matters with him, arranged the final details, giving the command of the expedition to Admiral Watson by sea and to Colonel Clive[1] by land. Their relations to each other and to the Council of Fort William were left unsettled, though the authority of the latter was formally acknowledged. Mr. Manningham pointed out[2] that the powers given to the Deputies on the 21st September were inconsistent with the recognition of the Council of Fort William, and accordingly on the 1st October[3] the Deputies were withdrawn; but Colonel Clive was entrusted with independent authority in all military matters, which, as we shall see, was much resented by the Council of Fort William.[4] Mr. Walsh, one of the Deputies and a relative of the Colonel, was appointed Paymaster to the force. This was to include 595[5] Europeans, officers and men.[6] 29th September, 1756.

The despatch of these troops would leave Madras very weak, and accordingly a letter was sent to Mr. Bourchier, Governor of Bombay, asking for reinforcements.

On the 13th October the Council of Fort St. George wrote to Bengal[7] that the object of the expedition was not merely to re-establish the British Settlements in Bengal, but to obtain ample recognition of the Company's privileges and reparation for its 13th October, 1756.

[1] Major Killpatrick to succeed him in case of necessity.

[2] Vol. I., p. 223.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 234, and Vol. II., p. 93.

[5] Vol. I., p. 228.

[6] The information regarding the constitution of the force is not very clear. Other accounts give different figures. The Select Committee's letter to Bengal, dated 13th October, 1756, gives 528 military, 109 train (artillery), and 940 sepoys. In another account (Vol. III., p. 30) the figures are 276 King's troops, 616 Company's, and 1,308 sepoys and lascars. Of these 97 of the first, 146 of the second, and 430 of the last were on the *Cumberland* and *Marlborough*, which did not manage to reach Bengal until long after Calcutta had been recaptured.

[7] Vol. I., p. 239.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

losses, but that if the Nawab were willing to make a satisfactory Peace they ought not to let

'sentiments of revenging injuries, although they were never more just,'

induce them to run the risk of war and the consequent expense,

'but we are of opinion that the sword should go hand-in-hand with the pen, and that, on the arrival of the present armament, hostilities should immediately commence with the utmost vigour. These hostilities must be of every kind which can either distress his dominions and estate, or bring reprizals into our possession.'

This letter contains another suggestion which was to bear ample fruit, as it fully coincided with the opinion not only of the British but of all the Europeans in Bengal,[1] viz., that a Revolution was necessary if the European trade was to continue.

'We need not represent to you the great advantage which we think it will be to the military operations, and the influence it will have in the Nabob's councils, to effect a junction with any powers in the provinces of Bengal that may be dissatisfied with the violences of the Nabob's government, or that may have pretensions to the Nabobship.'[2]

Thus the Select Committee did not limit its consideration to the mere recapture of Calcutta, but wisely provided a force which might be capable of taking full advantage of its success. Clive realized very clearly the magnitude of the task with which he was entrusted. In a letter to his father he writes:

'This expedition, if attended with success, may enable me to do great things. It is by far the grandest of my undertakings. I go with great forces and great authority.'[3]

Yet he was not altogether certain of success.

'I am not so apprehensive of the Nabob of Bengal's forces as of being recalled by the news of a war, or checked in our progress by the woods and swampiness of the country, which is represented as almost impassable for a train of artillery.'[4]

It is curious to observe the contrast between the behaviour of

[1] See Renault's opinion on the state of affairs in Bengal (Vol. I., p. 211), and Law's (Vol. III., p. 173).

[2] Vol. I., p. 239.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[4] Letter to Mr. Mabbot (Vol. I., p. 228).

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the Councils of Fort William and Fort St. George. The former, vacillating and uncertain, could not provide even for the necessities of the day, whilst the latter, as brave men always will, drew inspiration from the disaster which had befallen their country and which it was their happy lot to avenge and repair. They felt they were running a great risk owing to the preponderance of the French forces in Madras, but this only suggested the possibility of delivering a deadly blow to France in Bengal. Clive speaks of the coming war with France not merely as possibly hindering the expedition to Bengal, but as certainly giving him a chance to capture Chandernagore,[1] and as soon as they knew that war had been declared[2] the Select Committee wrote to Bengal:

'We have desired Mr. Watson, if he thinks it practicable, to dispossess the French of Chandernagore, not doubting but it will be of infinite service in your affairs. Should you be of this opinion we desire that you will enforce our recommendation.'[3]

This letter reached Bengal only on the 13th January, 1757.

[1] Vol. I., p. 233.
[2] This was on the 13th November (Vol. I., p. 302).
[3] Vol. I., p. 302.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER XI.

THE EXPEDITION TO BENGAL.

'After a tedious and difficult passage . . . our quick progress has occasioned a general consternation.'—CLIVE.[1]

16th October, 1756. ON the 16th October[2] Admirals Watson and Pocock sailed with a fleet of five King's ships, the *Kent*, *Cumberland*, *Tyger*, *Salisbury* and *Bridgewater*, the *Blaze*[3] fireship, and the Company's ships *Walpole* and *Marlborough*. Another armed ship belonging to the Company, the *Protector*, having arrived after the departure of the fleet, was ordered to follow, and did so on the 27th of the month. Two more country ships, the *Lapwing* and *Bonetta*, were also despatched carrying a small number of sepoys.

It appears that the vessels were victualled and watered only for six weeks, which, considering that the *Delaware* made the passage in fifteen days,[4] might have been thought sufficient; but in the days of sailing ships everything depended upon the weather, and the delay which Admiral Watson had recommended for the health of the troops had the disadvantage of exposing the fleet to baffling winds. The *Protector*, by taking a different course,[5] managed to arrive in the Hugli at the same time as the fleet, but even then her voyage occupied a month and a half.[6]

10th November, 1756. By the 10th November it was realized that the voyage was going to be a tedious one, and the squadron was put on two-thirds allowance. On the 15th the seamen and military were reduced to

[1] Vol. II., pp. 89, 90.

[2] Vol. III., p. 30.

[3] This vessel, proving leaky, was ordered back on the 16th November (Vol. III., p. 31).

[4] 21st July to 4th August (Vol. III., p. 19). The *Delaware* took only a week from Madras to Culpee.

[5] *Ives' Journal*, p. 97 note.

[6] 27th October to 12th December (Vol. III., p. 23).

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

half rations of provisions. Scurvy began to appear on the ships, especially amongst the seamen. On the 16th November the *Marlborough*, sailing very slowly, was lost sight of by the fleet. On the 1st December the *Cumberland* struck on the reef off Point Palmyras, but was got off without damage. Two days later the *Kent*, *Tyger*, and *Walpole* managed to round the Point. On the 4th the expedition was met by a pilot sloop, and took on board Mr. Grant, the pilot. The squadron was in great distress for want of water and provisions, and had many men down with scurvy. On the 5th December the Admiral anchored in Ballasore Roads. Here he had to wait until the pilots, Messrs. Smith and Grant, were able to take the ships over the dangerous shoals at the mouth of the river Hugli. 5th-8th December, 1756.

On the 8th the *Kent*, *Tyger*, and *Walpole* weighed anchor, after the last mentioned ship had received a supply of rice from the pilot sloops. As she carried only sepoys who would not touch the meat provided for the British soldiers,[1] she was in great want of provisions. The same day Messrs. Watts and Becher came on board as deputies from Mr. Drake and the Council, and informed the Admiral of the sickness amongst the British at Fulta, and that Major Killpatrick had now only thirty men fit for duty.

On the 13th December the Admiral arrived at Culpee, and was welcomed by Messrs. Drake and Holwell. He wrote the next day to Mr. Bisdom, and probably to M. Renault, informing them of his arrival, and warning them that, as he was informed the Nawab had demanded their assistance, he would look upon any help given to that prince as an act of war against Britain.[2] Mr. Bisdom replied on the 19th welcoming the Admiral, and promising to observe neutrality; but apparently no answer was received from M. Renault till after the recapture of Calcutta. 13th December, 1756.

The Admiral arrived at Fulta on the 15th December, where he found the *Kingfisher*, the *Delaware* and the *Protector*. So far he had heard nothing for many days of the *Cumberland*, *Salisbury*, 15th December, 1756.

[1] 'When the forces came from Madrass, by the unexpected length of the passage, they were greatly reduced for provisions, insomuch that there was no rice left for the *Gentoo* seapoys, and nothing to serve out to them but beef and pork; but though some did submit to this defilement, yet many preferred a languishing death by famine to life polluted beyond recovery.'—Scrafton, 'Reflections,' p. 11.

[2] Vol. II. p. 54.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Bridgewater, and *Marlborough*. The *Bridgewater* arrived on the 24th, and the *Salisbury* on the 25th, but the *Cumberland* and *Marlborough* had been forced to put back, thus depriving the expedition of some 250 Europeans and 430 sepoys,[1] with almost all the artillery and military stores. This was a very serious matter, for there had been so much sickness at Fulta that of the Europeans from Calcutta and Major Killpatrick's detachment of 200 men there were in all only about 100 men left effective.[2]

Watson and Clive were immediately offered seats on the Council, and the same day, the 15th, Clive opened negotiations by a letter to Mānik Chand enclosing a draft of a letter for the Nawab. Mānik Chand replied in a friendly manner, and sent down one Rādhā Krishna Malik as his confidential agent. He also explained that Clive's letter to the Nawab was written in a very improper tone, and forwarded a letter which he suggested he should copy.[3] To this Clive replied that a letter couched in the style recommended by Mānik Chand might have been suitable before the capture of Calcutta, but was very ill-suited to a time when

'we are come to demand satisfaction for the injuries done us by the Nawab, not to entreat his favour, and with a force which we think sufficient to vindicate our claim.'[4]

16th December, 1756.

On the 16th Admiral Watson applied to the Dutch for the assistance of their pilots. This request, seeing that the English pilots were all at his disposal, was probably due to the character of the channel of the Hugli, which changes so rapidly that it is necessary to watch it carefully day by day, and it was the Dutch who had the privilege of buoying the Hugli.[5] Mr. Bisdom, however, was determined not to involve himself with the Nawab by premature action in favour of the British, and explained that five of the seven Dutch pilots were ill, and that no less than twenty-four Dutch ships were under embargo at the Moorish posts of Calcutta, Muckwa Tanna, and Budge Budge

[1] It is difficult to ascertain the exact number, as there had been a redistribution of the forces on board during the voyage.

[2] Vol. II., p. 89. Mr. Tooke says (Vol. I., p. 300) only 90 men. A letter from the *Delaware* says that 300 out of 320 soldiers carried on that ship died at Fulta (Vol. III., p. 94).

[3] Vol. II., p. 75. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 76. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

on suspicion of carrying anchors, ropes, and provisions for the British.[1]

Watson and Clive now thought it necessary to address the Nawab directly, and this they did on the 17th in separate letters of an unmistakably threatening character. It is certain he received these letters, but it is doubtful whether he made any reply.[2] 17th December, 1756.

Watson was eager to advance up the river, but he had as yet little more than half his force. All he could do was to send up the *Kingfisher* to reconnoitre, as it was feared that the passage at Tanna might be blocked by sunken ships.[3] In fact, it appears that one Hubboo Syrang, one of the Company's old boatmen who had been forced into Mānik Chand's service, was appointed for this duty, but managed to avoid acting on his orders, so that the ships afterwards found the passage clear.[4]

In the meantime even this short delay was affecting the health of the men. Clive made every effort to obtain information, but fell ill of fever, and had to leave all the preparation of the land forces to Major Killpatrick.[5] It was not until the 25th that the pilots reported that the state of the river was favourable for the ships, and even then, probably owing to the late arrival of the *Salisbury*, the advance did not begin until the 27th. The sepoys were ordered to march overland, contrary to Clive's wishes[6] as the roads were by no means suited for troops, but he was not at this time in a position to have his own way. On the 28th the sepoys reached Mayapur, where they were joined by the Company's troops, and on the 29th arrived at Budge Budge. Here the troops halted near the river-bank in a position where they could be seen from the mastheads of the ships, but could not see the Fort, as they were themselves surrounded by bushes. Clive had been absolutely unable to obtain any trustworthy intelligence, and without his knowing it the enemy were encamped within two miles of him.[7] The greater part of his little army was thrown out in different directions, when the small force under his immediate command—about 260 Europeans—was suddenly attacked by a body of 27th December, 1756. 29th December, 1756.

[1] Vol. II., p. 72. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 71, 86, 114, 173.
[3] Vol. II., p. 73. [4] Vol. III., p. 346. [5] Vol. II., p. 73.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 97. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

2,000 men, whom Mānik Chand had brought down. The fighting lasted for half an hour, the enemy, who were

'presumptuous from their triumph over us at Calcutta,'[1]

sheltered by trees and bushes, showing great boldness; but they were driven off, and the arrival of the King's troops, who had been landed for the attack of the Fort of Budge Budge and had heard the firing, made Clive's position safe. The British lost one officer, Ensign Charles Kerr, and nine private men killed and eight men wounded.[2] The loss of the enemy was about 200 killed and wounded, including four officers of rank. Mānik Chand himself received a bullet through his turban. In describing this fight Clive writes:—

'I cannot take upon me to give my sentiments about our future success against the Nabob in the open field; the little affair above mentioned was attended with every disadvantage on our side: a number of houses, *jungalls*, bushes, etc., which this country seems full of, served as a cover for the enemy, all our sepoys and the choice of our Europeans absent—our cannon in a manner useless.'[3]

Nothing is more conspicuous in Clive's private letters than the extreme caution with which he expresses any opinion as to future success.

The skirmish at Budge Budge took place about mid-day. The fleet,[4] the *Tyger* leading, had arrived before the Fort shortly before 8 a.m., when the Fort opened fire upon her. The fact that the enemy commenced hostilities was duly noted later by the Council and Colonel in their letters to the Nawab and his subjects as a justification for the action of the British.[5] The enemy were quickly driven from their guns, and the King's troops landed to attack the Fort. Captain Coote wished to make an assault at once, but his superior officer, Captain Weller, landing, and word being brought that Colonel Clive was engaged with the enemy, it became necessary to go to his assistance. When the skirmish was over Clive went on board to consult the Admiral, and at 7 p.m. the latter sent Captain King ashore with 100 seamen to storm the Fort the same evening; but Clive ordered Captain Coote to postpone the attack until next morning, he and Major Killpatrick being utterly

[1] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 59.
[2] Vol. III., p. 33.
[3] Vol. II., p. 98.
[4] Vol. III., p. 4.
[5] Vol. II., pp. 84, 124.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

worn out by the long march of the previous night. Captain Coote remonstrated, and was sent to ask the Admiral for orders. Whilst he was on board, about 11 p.m., a drunken sailor named Strahan[1] waded through the moat, climbed the ramparts, shot or knocked down the first men he met, and cried out that the Fort was captured. In a moment his comrades had followed him, and the natives were either killed or driven out. Coote sadly remarked in his Journal:

'Thus the place was taken without the least honour to anyone.'[2]

Captain Campbell in the Company's service was shot by some of the soldiers as he was calling on them to cease fire for fear of hitting their own men who had already entered the Fort, and four of the King's soldiers were wounded. With this trifling loss the British captured a fort which

'was extremely well situated for defence, and had the advantage of a wet ditch round it, but was badly provided with cannon, as we found only eighteen guns.'[3]

Next day the Fort was demolished, and the troops re-embarked in the evening. The sepoys remained ashore, and continued their march by land the whole of the 31st. 30th-31st December, 1756.

On the 1st January, 1757, the fleet anchored between Tanna Fort and a new mud Fort[4] on the opposite bank. A French ship lying here saluted the fleet with nine guns.[5] This gave rise to the rumour that the French had assisted the British in the attack on Tanna, but as a matter of fact the enemy abandoned the forts as the ships approached. The British found in them about forty guns, 1st January, 1757.

'all mounted on good carriages, most of them the Company's.'[6]

In the night the Admiral sent the boats up the river to set fire to a ship and some vessels which lay under the Fort, and were intended to be used as fire-ships. This duty was successfully executed.[7]

At five in the morning of the 2nd January the Company's troops were landed, and with the sepoys marched on Calcutta. Admiral Watson, thinking two ships enough for the attack, ordered the 2nd January, 1757.

[1] *Ives' Journal*, p. 101, and Vol. III., p. 92.
[2] Vol. III., p. 41.
[3] Vol. II., p. 197. Another account says twenty-two guns (Vol. III., p. 34).
[4] Aligarh (Vol. III., p. 34).
[5] Vol. III., p. 2.
[6] Vol. II., p. 197. Another account says fifty-six guns (Vol. III., p. 35).
[7] Vol. II., p. 197.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Salisbury to remain as a guardship, to prevent the enemy reoccupying Tanna Fort, and proceeded to Calcutta with the *Kent* and *Tyger* alone. The latter was fired at from the batteries on the bank below Calcutta, but these were deserted as the ships advanced. About half-past ten they came opposite Fort William, and in a few minutes the enemy were driven out with such precipitation that the landing-parties from the fleet were able to make prisoners of only a few of the native soldiers.[1] On the British side three of the King's soldiers and six sailors were killed. In the Fort ninety-one guns and four mortars were taken.

Captain Coote was now sent ashore with a garrison of King's soldiers, and orders not to give up the place to anyone without the Admiral's permission. Accordingly, when the Company's forces approached and the sepoys were about to enter they were refused admission. The sentries, however, admitted Colonel Clive, who requested Captain Coote to make over the place to him as his superior officer. Captain Coote pleaded the Admiral's instructions, and asked permission to refer the matter to him. This was done, and Captain Speke brought back a message[2] to the effect that if Colonel Clive persisted in staying in the Fort the Admiral would be forced to resort to measures which would be disagreeable to both of them. Clive refused to retire, but offered to make over the Fort to Admiral Watson if he would himself come ashore. Captain Latham, who was a mutual friend of both the Admiral and Clive, succeeded in persuading the Admiral to agree to these conditions, and the absurd quarrel was at an end.[3]

3rd January, 1757. On the morning of the 3rd January Admiral Watson came ashore, received the keys from Clive, and made over the place formally to Mr. Drake and the Council of Fort William. This enabled Mr. Drake to say later on that he had been restored to his position by the authority of the Admiral.[4]

The quarrel between Watson and Clive is of importance only as showing the difficulties which the latter had to surmount in this

[1] 'At ten minutes past eleven the *Kent* sent a boat manned and armed to search a French sloop we suspected was carrying off the Europeans who had escaped from the Fort' (Vol. III., p. 3).

[2] Vol. II., p. 77. This is not quite the same as threatening to fire upon him, which is Clive's own version of the story (Vol. III., p. 309).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 96, and Vol. III., p. 309. [4] Vol. II., p. 154.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

LORD CLIVE.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF INDIA

expedition. Clive was not only a military man, but practically a Company's servant. He therefore suffered not only from the friction that almost invariably showed itself when the naval and military services were acting together, but also from that ignorant contempt which the King's military officers exhibited towards the Company's. Added to this, the independent powers given him by the Madras authorities rendered him obnoxious to the Council of Fort William, especially to men like Holwell,[1] who felt that the distrust shown towards them was largely due to no fault of their own, but to the weakness of Drake and his companions. Clive, though he was himself a heavy loser by the capture of Calcutta,[2] could not understand the behaviour of the Bengal civilians, and it was equally inexplicable to others of the relieving expedition. Surgeon Ives writes that when the squadron arrived at Fulta the people there, in spite of the miseries they had endured,

'when we saw them first, appeared with as cheerful countenances as if no misfortunes had happened to them.'[3]

In fact, the only effect of their sufferings was to make them anticipate the sweets of revenge. They looked upon the Madras forces as if they had been sent merely to restore their ruined fortunes, whereas Watson and Clive considered that they had come to revenge the victims of the Black Hole and to obtain compensation for the losses of the Company. Consequently we are not astonished to find Clive writing:

'The loss of private property, and the means of recovering it, seem to be the only object which takes up the attention of the Bengal gentlemen,'[4]

whilst the latter soon came to regard him as a kind of personal enemy, and one who, whilst seeking to benefit the Company, cared nothing for their private wrongs and sufferings. Accordingly, they strove to make a friend in Admiral Watson, and to create bad blood between him and the Colonel. Clive suspected Holwell of being the chief mover in this intrigue, whilst both he and Killpatrick seem to have felt a kindly pity and even liking for

[1] Vol. II., p. 132.

[2] 'My loss by the capture of Calcutta is not less than £2,500, so that hitherto I am money out of pocket by my second trip to India' (Vol. II., p. 210).

[3] *Ives' Journal*, p. 97. [4] Vol. II., p. 96.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Drake. Clive wrote to Mr. Drake, senior, that if his nephew had erred he believed it to be 'in judgment, not principle,'[1] and Killpatrick to the Directors that the President was 'perfectly attached to their interest.'[2] It is even more curious to find that as late as the end of 1758 Clive writes in terms of disapprobation of Holwell, and in praise of Manningham, Frankland, and Sumner, who had all shown the white feather during the siege.

[1] Vol. II., p. 186. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER XII.

HUGLI, CHITPUR AND THE TREATY OF THE 9TH FEBRUARY.

'What an army of Englishmen was capable of doing.'—ADMIRAL WATSON.[1]

THE British found Calcutta in ruins. The Fort was much damaged; Government House, the Barracks for the Company's servants, and the Laboratory had been burnt. Part of the eastern curtain had been pulled down to make room for the mosque built by the Nawab. Outside the Fort the Church, the Company's House, the houses of Messrs. Cruttenden, Eyre, and Rannie had been burnt; in the other European houses the furniture, doors, and windows had been used for firewood; even the wooden wharfs along the river had been destroyed.[2] The native part of the town had suffered probably even more severely; parts of it were burnt by the British, parts by the Nawab's troops, and the whole of it, except a few houses like that of Omichand, over which the Nawab's flag had been hoisted, had been plundered. Yet the Europeans were prepared to welcome any change after Fulta, and joyously resumed possession of their old homes, so that by the end of January visitors found Calcutta a very pleasant place. One of the new comers writes:

'The people are all agreeable, vastly free, and very obliging to everybody: once introduced, you are always known to them, and you dine and sup where you please after the first visit without any ceremony. Provisions are vastly cheap, and the best of all kinds of any Indian Settlement. . . . The houses are all large and grand, with fine balconies all round them (to keep out the sun) which make a noble appearance. . . . In about half a year's time I imagine Calcutta will be once more in a flourishing state.'[3]

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[1] Vol. II., p. 212.

[2] Vol. I., p. 54, and Vol. III., p. 91.

[3] Vol. III., p. 91.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

And yet the residents were all so nearly bankrupt that Council had to write to the Court of Directors asking that the ordinary laws against debtors might be suspended.[1] As a further measure of relief, those persons who claimed to have owned Company's bonds and could procure any evidence of the fact were paid their interest and granted fresh bonds, whilst Committees were appointed to examine all claims brought for payment for military stores and provisions sent into the Fort before the siege, and also into the losses of private individuals during the Troubles. Whatever the Madras authorities might advise and Clive attempt to achieve in the making of a Peace with the Nawab which should simply recoup the Company for its losses, there was hardly a man in Calcutta who was not determined that some way or other restitution should be obtained for private losses as well. This feeling will be found influencing all the public proceedings of the Council, and probably suggested those private donations by Mīr Jafar to the leading men in Calcutta which caused so much question in England later on.

2nd-3rd January, 1757.

As has been said, the Admiral handed over the Fort to Mr. Drake and the Council on the 3rd January. They had already, on the 2nd, drawn up in the name of the Company a Manifesto or Declaration of War against the Nawab, and requested the Admiral to do the same in the name of the King. This he did next day. These documents[2] recapitulated the ill-treatment suffered by the British at the hands of the Nawab, the hostility shown by his officers at Budge Budge, Tanna, and Calcutta to Admiral Watson, and warned the natives and foreign nations in Bengal to give no assistance to the enemies of the British, whilst they offered protection to all natives who would join them. It was evident that the Fort could not be defended against a second attack, so on the 6th January the Select Committee ordered the destruction of all the houses round the Fort, and Colonel Clive and Captain Barker were instructed to submit a plan of defence, which they did on the 10th. At the same meeting the opposition to Clive's independent powers began to show itself more boldly, and it was determined to send a remonstrance to Madras on the subject.

[1] Vol. II., p. 192. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 86.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

It was now thought necessary to take precautions against the French, for the rumour of war in Europe was in everyone's mouth.[1] In spite of their kind treatment of the British at Cossimbazar, Dacca, and Chandernagore, it was universally believed that the French had assisted the Nawab, and it was expected that they would do so again. The Portuguese in Calcutta were Catholics; they had behaved badly in the siege, and as it was feared they would help the French in time of war, the Council determined to prohibit the public exercise of the Catholic religion in Calcutta. The Catholic priests were accordingly expelled from the town.[2] As they could no longer use their Church, it was taken over by the Protestants,[3] and both the Company's Chaplains, Messrs. Bellamy and Mapletoft, being dead, Mr. Cobbe, Chaplain of the *Kent*, was appointed Chaplain of Calcutta.[4]

Mānik Chand, the Governor of Calcutta, had, as we have seen, a narrow escape from being killed at Budge Budge. His presence there at all was probably due to that contempt for the Europeans which was so openly shown by the natives after the capture of Calcutta, but his experience at Budge Budge was sufficient to make him change his opinion. He made no stand at Calcutta, but hastily betook himself to Hugli, whence he sent word to the Nawab at Murshidabad that the British he had now to deal with were a very different kind of men from those whom he had defeated at Calcutta. What had most terrified Mānik Chand and the natives generally was the firing of the heavy guns on the big ships. Nothing so dreadful had ever been known in Bengal, and the most extraordinary ideas were entertained of what the ships could do, many supposing that they would ascend the river even as far as Murshidabad. Admiral Watson and the Council, however, thought that something more substantial than these vague fears was necessary to re-establish the reputation of the British in Bengal, and so two plans of operations were discussed. One was to send a party of sailors by river to Dacca, apparently to seize that town, and possibly to set up one of the sons of Sarfarāz Khān,

[1] Vol. II., p. 97.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 190. The laws of the Company regarding the Catholics were already sufficiently severe (Vol. I., p. 298).

[3] Hyde, 'Parochial Annals of Bengal,' p. 116.

[4] Vol. II., p. 190.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

who were prisoners there, as a rival to Sirāj-uddaula ;[1] the other, easier and more practicable, was to send a small expedition to Hugli and burn the granaries and stores which the Nawab had ordered to be collected near that city. As was natural, this was the plan at last decided upon, whilst to protect Calcutta itself
11th January, 1757. Clive, on the 11th,[2] constructed a fortified camp just outside of the town and north of the Maratha Ditch, near Barnagore, so as to prevent the Nawab advancing directly upon it.[3] His reason for taking up what he himself calls a very hazardous position was simply a choice of the least of evils. It was, he says,

'preferable to continuing in the Fort, which is in a most wretched defenceless condition in itself, and all the houses round it in such numbers that I almost despair of its being made defensible in any time.'[4]

The country in which he established his camp was then very wild, and Surgeon Ives tells us that whilst Clive was surveying the ground for his entrenchment, a wild buffalo attacked his guard and killed one of the sepoys before it could be despatched.[5]

Clive was still in a state of doubt regarding the prospects of the campaign.

'From the slight trial we have hitherto had of the enemy, we cannot form a judgment what success we may promise ourselves against them; deficient as we are of our complement of men, artillery, and stores, the event must needs be doubtful.'[6]

One feels, sometimes, a suspicion that this apparent uncertainty was not really felt by Clive, but was assumed in order to persuade his correspondents to send him reinforcements. Wellington in the Peninsula resorted to the same device.

8th January, 1757. On the 8th January Clive's position had been improved by news of the arrival of the *Marlborough* in the river.[7] The full value of this reinforcement may be judged by the fact that, owing to sickness, he had now only 300 Europeans of the Company's troops fit for

[1] This is only referred to in the Records (Vol. II., p. 175).
[2] Vol. III., p. 36.
[3] Vol. II., p. 176, and Vol. III., p. 58.
[4] Vol. II., p. 95.
[5] *Ives' Journal*, p. 111 note.
[6] Vol. II., p. 90.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

service.[1] The *Marlborough*, with between 300 and 400 sepoys and all the field-guns, arrived at Calcutta on the 19th or 20th.[2] On the 21st Clive was joined by the King's troops, whom the Admiral sent ashore at his request, and having at last got them under his own command, he wrote to Mr. Pigot that he intended to keep them as long as they might be wanted.[3]

We must now follow the expedition against Hugli. On the 4th January 130 of the King's troops, the grenadier company and 300 sepoys, under the command of Major Killpatrick, were embarked on board the *Bridgewater* (Captain Smith), *Kingfisher* (Captain Toby), and *Thunder* (Captain Warwick). Captain King was in command of a landing-party composed of seamen.[4] The same day the *Bridgewater* went aground off Perrin's Garden, and was not got off till late in the afternoon of the 5th, when she got up to Barnagore.[5] This was a Dutch Settlement, and the British being unacquainted with the river above Calcutta, Captain Smith asked for the assistance of the Dutch pilots. As the Dutch would not give him any, on the 8th he sent on board the Dutch vessel *De Ryder* and carried off by force one of the quartermasters, whom he compelled to pilot the ships.[6] The delay caused by the grounding of the *Bridgewater* and waiting for a pilot at Barnagore allowed news of the expedition to get up to Hugli. The native merchants removed their plunder and goods, some inland, others to the Dutch Settlement at Chinsurah.[7] It was even said that the Dutch allowed the *Faujdār* of Hugli to take the guns out of their Fort to use against the British.[8]

4th January, 1757.

5th January, 1757.

8th January, 1757.

On the 9th the latter passed the French Factory at Chandernagore without the little fleet paying the French the usual courtesy of a salute, and, after firing a few shot at a force with which Mānik Chand[9] was trying to relieve the garrison, they arrived just below the native Fort about three miles higher up, and landed a party of troops. The latter set to work to burn the houses round them and to block up all the approaches to the Fort, and then lay waiting in Coja Wājid's garden until the ships which had anchored

9th January, 1757.

[1] Vol. II., p. 124.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 200, and Vol. III., p. 24.
[3] Vol. II., p. 133.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 199.
[5] Vol. III., p. 35.
[6] Vol. II., pp. 82, 98, 109.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 99.
[9] Vol. III., p. 13.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

close in shore and begun a bombardment should have effected a breach. This was completed by evening, and at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 10th the Fort was stormed by the land force. The enemy had been deceived by a false attack, and the stormers entered without any serious opposition. As soon as they were inside, the defenders took to flight, though they numbered 2,000 men.[1]

10th January, 1757.

11th-19th January, 1757.

The 11th January was spent in plundering the houses round the Fort, and on the 12th Captain Coote was sent up to Bandel to protect the men-of-war's boats, which were searching the creeks for vessels belonging to the enemy. He burnt one of the great granaries in a village three or four miles above the Fort, and had to fight his way back for over a mile, firing the houses behind him as he passed.

From this time on to the 18th the troops were occupied in pillaging the native houses, even entering some within the Dutch Settlement on the plea that they belonged to subjects of the Nawab, or that property belonging to his subjects or plunder from Calcutta were concealed in them. Mr. Bisdom entered into an angry correspondence with Admiral Watson, and the Admiral sent up his own Captain[2] to discuss the matter with him; but the sailors ashore could not be restrained, and Mr. Bisdom, though he protested he had not sheltered any of the Nawab's men, and that he had issued orders by beat of drum that no property belonging to the British was to be brought into the Settlement, rather weakened his case by confessing that it was easy for the native inhabitants to deceive him, as the Settlement was an open town.

'Anyone may come and go without its coming to our knowledge from want of servants and watchmen, not to mention the fact, as well known to yourself as to me, that it is always possible to buy the services of the natives for a penny or so; wherefore I am greatly astonished that you ascribe my powerlessness in the matter to a want of sincerity in the observance of the neutrality and the maintenance of the published prohibition.'[3]

Mr. Bisdom's position was indeed one to be pitied. His pilots had brought up the British, and it was useless for him to protest to the Nawab's officers that they had been forced to do so,

[1] Vol. III., p. 42.
[2] Captain Henry Speke (Vol. II., p. 199).
[3] Vol. II., p. 111.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

especially whilst he appeared to allow the British sailors to plunder the houses of native inhabitants of the Settlement. It was certain that the British must soon retire, and it was not known what vengeance the Nawab would take upon him. As early as the 13th the Dutch Council ordered all the women to go on board the ships,[1] but the British would not allow the vessels to leave the town.

At last on the 19th, having destroyed all the Nawab's forts and granaries, the British embarked and returned to Calcutta, ravaging the banks of the river on both sides, and only barely respecting French territory. The same day the Nawab arrived at Tribeni, a little above Hugli.[2] 19th January, 1757.

The natives of the country had now had a taste of what British troops could do. The sailors especially had given them an example of unheard-of courage and recklessness. It has been already related how a single British sailor took the Fort of Budge Budge, and now an eye-witness wrote:

'The courage of the Admiral's sailors is almost incredible. Three or four, with their cutlasses, will attack fifty or more of the enemy, who are struck with such a pannic at the sight of them that they run from them whenever they see them coming, the sailors being determined neither to give nor receive any quarter.'[3]

Nor were the Madras sepoys anyway behind the Europeans. They had been taught to fight by Clive, and now they fought side by side with their European comrades, engaging any odds with the most dauntless courage.[4] The Nawab, however, still trusted in his good fortune. He had started from Murshidabad as soon as he heard of the attack upon the Fort at Hugli; but his army showed many signs of unwillingness to march, and so he took the precaution of accompanying his preparations for attack by the pretence of asking the French and Dutch to mediate between him and the British. It was apparently under his orders that the Seths wrote to Clive[5] on the 14th remonstrating against the violence used by the British at Hugli,[6] and this was followed on the 17th[7] by a letter from Coja Wājid proposing that the French might be 14th-17th January, 1757.

[1] Vol. II., p. 102. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 121. [3] Vol. III., p. 92. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[5] Clive had written to many of the chief persons of the Court asking for assistance, but up till this time few had thought it necessary to reply (Vol. II., p. 126).

[6] Vol. II., p. 104. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the medium of negotiation between the British and the Nawab.[1]

21st January, 1757. On the 21st Clive replied to Coja Wājid in terms evidently intended to frighten him, for he referred very plainly to the loss Coja Wājid had already suffered from the British in the plunder of his property at Hugli. At the same time he enclosed a copy of the demands made by the British,[2] and offered to accept the mediation of Coja Wājid and the Seths. The Dutch also had offered their services, but the Admiral did not wish to accept their mediation as they were 'only a Republic,' and promptly declined it,[3] whilst Clive did not wish for the mediation of the French, who, he suspected, were at war with the British in Europe. However, on the 21st January there arrived at Calcutta two gentlemen—Messrs. Laporterie and Sinfray—deputed from M. Renault.[4] They acquainted the Council that they were not authorized to propose terms on behalf of the Nawab, but were prepared to act as mediators and to forward any proposals the Council might make. Accordingly they were verbally informed of the proposals already sent to Coja Wājid, viz.:

(1) That the British should receive complete reparation for all their losses.

(2) That the Company should be allowed the full exercise of all its privileges in Bengal.

(3) That the British should have the right to fortify their Settlements as they pleased.

(4) That the Company should have a Mint at Calcutta.

26th January, 1757. On the 26th January the French Deputies brought back a reply from Coja Wājid asking that these proposals might be put into Persian, and expressing his opinion that the Nawab might agree to grant the first three demands, but as the Emperor alone could sanction the privilege of coining money the fourth was impossible. This reply, of course, did not bind the Nawab in any way, and was only a device for gaining time by prolonging negotiations, for the demands of the British were for everything that had caused the war, and no one dreamed that they could ask more even if they were to beat the Nawab in battle, which as yet they had not done. The Deputies found the British firm,

[1] It is not always easy to follow the course of these negotiations. The Select Committee (Vol. II., p. 207) had left the negotiations with the Nawab to the Admiral and Clive, but these two gentlemen do not seem to have always consulted each other.

[2] Vol. II., p. 126. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 131, 175. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and as they could effect nothing more, they returned to Chandernagore. Meanwhile on the 23rd the Admiral received a polite letter from the Nawab, and on the 24th[1] the Armenian Coja Petrus brought a letter from the Nawab's 'private Minister' asking Clive to make his proposals direct to the Nawab, which convinced Clive that he was now in earnest,[2] though at this very time the Nawab was writing to M. Renault pretending great anger with the British for refusing the mediation of the French, and declaring that without it he would make no terms with them.[3]

On the 27th the Admiral wrote to Sirāj-uddaula advising the punishment of the counsellors who had instigated the excesses he had committed, but this letter produced no effect. As the Nawab approached Calcutta he was encouraged in his hopes of success by the same signs that had accompanied his first march. The sick and women were put on board,[4] and the natives were hurrying from Calcutta, probably out of fright, but M. Law suggests that they had been expelled by the British to deceive the Nawab.[5] On the 2nd February Clive submitted to the Select Committee a letter from the Nawab asking for envoys to be sent to his *Darbār*. Messrs. Amyatt and Hastings were accordingly deputed to make not only the demands transmitted to Coja Wājid, but also three additional ones, to the effect— 27th January, 1757. 2nd February, 1757.

(1) That the Nawab should not demand or molest any of the merchants or inhabitants of Calcutta;

(2) That the *dastak* of the British should protect all their boats and goods passing through the country;

(3) That articles to the above effect should be signed and sealed by the Nawab and his Ministers.

It must have been evident to everyone that both the Nawab and the British intended to bring matters to a decision by force, the one pretending readiness to receive proposals, the other asking more and more on each new occasion. Meanwhile the Nawab's forces were steadily approaching Calcutta. On the 14th January they had been found by the Brahmin Rang Lāl at Nya Serai. On the 19th the Nawab was at Hugli. Here he seems to have halted for some time, probably to inquire into the behaviour of the French and Dutch. 14th January to 3rd February, 1757.

[1] Vol. II., p. 133. Vol. III., pp. 17, 24, 26. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 185. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Before the British attack on Hugli, M. Law, looking forward to the war with England, had steadily cultivated his favour, and had been promised a *parwāna* very favourable to the French. But when the Nawab heard that the French had allowed the British fleet to pass Chandernagore without firing on it, he was furious, and tore up the *parwāna*. Apparently the failure of the French Deputies to persuade the British to allow of their mediation now convinced him that he had been mistaken. At any rate, he pretended to believe in their loyalty, and slowly proceeded on his march. On the 25th his vanguard under his brother was at Cowgachi,[1] and on the 30th January the Nawab himself crossed the river at Hugli.[2] On the 2nd February, as we have seen, he sent a messenger—Coja Petrus—to Clive asking for the despatch of envoys, but he did not wait for a reply. M. Law points out that the Nawab ought never to have marched down to Calcutta.[3] As long as war lasted the British could do no trade, and could obtain provisions only with difficulty. He ought therefore to have prolonged the war, whereas he did the very reverse, and so played into the hands of the British. Though his messenger was still with Clive, on the 3rd February the Nawab's army began to defile past his (Clive's) camp towards Calcutta. Eyre Coote puts the number of his troops at 40,000 horse and 60,000 foot, 50 elephants and 30 pieces of cannon. The British force was 711 foot, 100 artillerymen with 14 six-pounder field-pieces, and 1,300 sepoys.[4] As the Nawab's messenger had promised that he would await Clive's reply at Nawabganj,[5] this advance of the army looked like treachery, more especially when some of the vanguard entered the town by the Dum Dum Road and began plundering.[6] Lieutenant Lebeaume was sent with a small force to drive these latter out, which he effected successfully, and about 5 p.m. Clive himself sent part of his force to harass the enemy on their march and ascertain where they were encamping. A brisk but indecisive cannonade followed until sunset, when Clive withdrew his forces to camp. The same evening he received another letter from the

3rd February, 1757.

[1] Vol. II., p. 133.
[2] Stewart, p. 515.
[3] Vol. III., p. 181.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 43.
[5] About twenty miles from Calcutta (Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 63).
[6] Vol. II., p. 210.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Nawab, and determined to despatch Messrs. Walsh and Scrafton to him with the Select Committee's proposals. They started on the morning of the 4th, but found he had left Nawabganj, and it was not until evening that they were brought to him in Omichand's garden in Calcutta itself.[1] Scrafton writes: 4th February, 1757.

'At seven in the evening the Soubah gave them audience in Omichund's garden, where he affected to appear in great state, attended by the best-looking men amongst his officers, hoping to intimidate them by so warlike an assembly.'[2]

The Deputies were referred to the Nawab's Ministers for an answer. They demanded that the Nawab should withdraw to Nawabganj, which the Ministers refused. They then asked for a private interview with the Nawab, but he pretended to be afraid of assassination, and declined. Accordingly they asked for permission to withdraw, which the Nawab granted, but bade them first see Jagat Seth's Agent, who had

'something to communicate to them that would be very agreeable to the Colonel.'

What this was is not known, but the Nawab had given orders that excuses were to be made to detain them, as he intended to attack the Fort next day. Suspecting his design, they retired to their tents, put out their lights as if they had gone to sleep, made their escape in the darkness, and joined Clive in camp. He determined at once to surprise the Nawab's army in the morning. On the 21st he had persuaded the Admiral to place the King's troops under his command, and Watson had already promised him a body of sailors if he should need them. Clive had been in the highest spirits since the capture of Hugli, and looked forward to the conflict with the certainty of success.[3] At the same time immediate action was necessary, for all his coolies had run away, and he could obtain supplies from the Fort only by water.[4] Clive felt

'if something was not done, the squadron and land forces would soon be starved out of the country.'[5]

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[1] It is asserted by the French that the Deputies were sent merely to spy out the camp (Vol. III., p. 182). In the 'Seir Mutaqherin' the work is said to have been done by a native spy (vol. ii., p. 221). Native tradition has it that the spy was the man afterwards so well known as Raja Naba Krishna.

[2] 'Reflections,' p. 64. [3] Vol. II., p. 209. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 238. [5] Vol. III., p. 310.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

He immediately wrote to the Admiral to land the sailors. The Admiral had already sent up the *Salisbury*[1] to cover the camp, and on receiving Clive's message he sent Captain Warwick ashore with 569 men.[2] They landed at Kelsall's Octagon at 1 a.m. on the 5th. At 2 a.m. they reached the Colonel's camp, and found his troops under arms. The whole force used in the attack numbered 500 rank and file, 800 sepoys, 600 sailors, and 60 artillerymen. A start was made almost immediately, and the little army reached the Nawab's camp to the north-east of Calcutta about daybreak. As is common at that period of the year, a heavy fog came on soon after sunrise, and the battle was fought in great confusion. The British, after repulsing one or two bold attacks of the Persian cavalry, forced their way through the enemy's camp, without the natives daring to come to close quarters, until they came opposite to the Nawab's tents in Omichand's garden. The Nawab himself was nearly surprised, and is said to have escaped with difficulty. About 9 a.m. the fog began to lift, and the British who were outside the town found themselves exposed to a cannonade from the natives, who had lined the Maratha Ditch. However, though they had to leave behind two guns which had broken down—a third was saved by the gallantry of Ensign York[3]—they forced their way southward as far as the Bungalow, where they came upon the great road or avenue which leads directly west to Fort William. Here the fighting ceased, and the British marched unmolested to the Fort, which they reached about noon. About 5 in the evening they returned to camp. Thus ended a skirmish which was much more bloody than the decisive battle of Plassey. The British had lost 27 soldiers, 12 sailors, and 18 sepoys killed; 70 soldiers, 12 seamen, and 55 sepoys wounded.[4] In their losses were included several officers: Captains Bridge and Pye and Clive's Private Secretary, Mr. Belcher, were killed; Captain Gaupp, Lieutenant Rumbold, Ensign William Ellis (a Company's servant), and Keshar Singh, commander of Clive's sepoys, were wounded.[5] On the other hand, the enemy

5th February, 1757.

[1] Vol. II., p. 211.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 253. The sailors had to draw the guns, and complained to the Admiral that they had been used as coolies (Vol. II., p. 395).

[3] Vol. III., p. 45. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 39. [5] Vol. II., p. 214.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

had lost 1,300 killed and wounded, amongst whom were 22 officers of distinction, and also a number of elephants, horses, camels, and bullocks.

At first the effect of this skirmish upon the Nawab's mind was not known in Calcutta, and the Admiral wrote to Sirāj-uddaula that the attack was merely a specimen of what English soldiers could do,[1] whilst Clive sarcastically remarked that he had been cautious to hurt none but those who opposed him.[2] From what M. Law says it appears that these letters were interpreted to the Nawab as threats to take him prisoner and send him to England.[3] On his march down he had found many of his soldiers, and even some of his officers,[4] unwilling to follow him, and the latter took advantage of the heavy losses they had already suffered and the alleged threats of the British to persuade the Nawab to peace. The Nawab was forced to agree, and thus gave another of the many accepted proofs of his cowardice; but in the absence of any definite information, we cannot speak positively as to his motives. Some accounts say that he fled from the field of battle, and was only brought back after the British had retired by the threats of his officers that the whole army would disperse if he did not rejoin it;[5] whilst others assert that it was he who rallied the troops as soon as the fog cleared, and that if he had been properly supported Clive would not have been able to effect his retreat in safety.[6] Whatever may be the true reason,[7] he agreed to a Peace, and Jagat Seth's broker, Ranjīt Rāi, wrote to Clive the same day, diplomatically informing him that what had happened would not be allowed to interfere with the negotiations. At the same time the Nawab's army decamped towards the Salt Lakes, so as to put a safe distance between it and Clive's forces. This made Admiral Watson suppose Ranjīt Rāi's letter to be merely a trick, and he urged Clive to pursue and attack the Nawab, even going so far as to suggest that Clive should call a Council of War.[8] To a man of Clive's character this was an insult, but he submitted, and apparently the Council of War supported him in his opinion

[1] Vol. II., p. 212. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 213. [3] Vol. III., p. 183.

[4] Scrafton says that Mīr Jafar was one of these ('Reflections,' p. 66).

[5] Vol. III., p. 183. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 246.

[7] Some writers say there was fresh news of an attack threatening from Delhi (Vol. II., pp. 223, 239).

[8] Vol. II., p. 215.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

9th February, 1757. that a further attack was unnecessary. On the 9th Clive received another letter from Ranjīt Rāi, which appeared to show that the Nawab was trying to postpone a decision, and therefore replied peremptorily, demanding that the Select Committee's proposals should be accepted at once.[1] The Nawab complied immediately, and formal agreements were exchanged between the Nawab and his Ministers on one side, and the Admiral and the Council of Fort William on the other.

This Treaty was shortly to the following effect:

1. All privileges granted by the Emperor of Delhi to the British to be confirmed.

2. All goods under the British *dastak* to pass free throughout Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa.

3. The Company's Factories and all goods and effects belonging to the Company, its servants or tenants, which had been taken by the Nawab to be restored; a sum of money to be paid for what had been plundered or pillaged by the Nawab's people.

4. Calcutta to be fortified as the British thought proper.

5. The British to have the right to coin *siccas*.

6. The Treaty to be ratified by the Nawab and his chief officers and Ministers.

7. Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive to promise on behalf of the English nation and Company to live on good terms with the Nawab so long as the latter observed the Treaty.

It will be seen at once that the Articles of the Treaty[2] are substantially the same as the demands of the Select Committee; but the manner of the Nawab's acceptance is neither clear nor satisfactory—*e.g.*, in reference to the demand for restitution for the losses of the British, the Nawab only promised to restore or pay for such property as had been entered in his own books,[3] thus taking no account of the property that had been plundered by his soldiers or which had been secreted by his officers. This was made the subject of further demands.

In addition to this no notice was taken in the Treaty of the losses of private sufferers, but the Nawab verbally promised a sum of 3 *lakhs*[4] for this purpose, and also, it seems, a particular sum

[1] Vol. II., p. 219. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 215. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 216.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 239, 308. The actual words are 'for the Company's other losses.'

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

to recoup Colonel Clive and Major Killpatrick for their personal losses, and 20,000 gold *mohurs* to be distributed amongst the leading persons in Calcutta for their good offices in arranging the Treaty.[1] The last-mentioned was unknown at the time to the parties concerned, and a mere trick of Ranjīt Rāi to get a handsome sum for himself. Clive mentions that the latter brought presents from the Nawab to the Admiral and himself, but there is no mention of money until later on.[2] Finally, the Nawab also agreed to a European envoy being sent to Murshidabad.

There was, however, one matter of which the British could not obtain a satisfactory settlement. Clive had proposed to the Nawab's envoys an alliance against, and an immediate attack upon, the French.[3] To this the Nawab would not agree, but he weakly wrote to both Watson[4] and Clive,[5] promising that he would have the same friends and enemies with them. These letters the British held to be as binding upon the Nawab as the Treaty itself, and his refusal to carry out his private promises they considered to be a breach of the Treaty.

No sooner was the Treaty signed than the Select Committee began to regret that they had allowed the Nawab such easy terms, and asked Clive to call a Council of War to consider whether the British were not strong enough to force him to grant better ones.[6] The Council replied that, all circumstances considered, it was not advisable to press the Nawab further, and so, fortunately for the credit of the British, the Committee determined not to break the Treaty which it had only just signed.

We have seen that Clive's relations with Admiral Watson were not of the most friendly nature. On the other hand, he met with equal hostility from the Council. Having entrusted the negotiations with the Nawab to Watson and Clive, they had sufficient leisure to brood over their grievance against the Madras authorities for investing Clive with independent powers. They not only wrote to Madras and to England complaining of the indignity thrust upon them, but they chose the critical moment,

[1] Vol. II., p. 381. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 240.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 240. In Watts' 'Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal,' p. 27, it is stated that news of the war in Europe arrived at Calcutta on the 10th February, but, as we have seen, it was known before by both French and English.

[4] Vol. II., p. 220. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 222. [6] *Ibid.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

when the Nawab was marching upon Calcutta, to harass Clive himself, and on the 18th January demanded that he should place himself under the orders of the Council of Fort William both as to the plan of military operations and the conduct of negotiations. In reply on the 20th January, Clive politely but firmly informed them that he would consult them in every way possible, but could not give up the authority he possessed to anyone but the Council of Fort St. George itself.[1]

In spite of all his vexations Clive's delight in his victory was intense, and he now ventured to give reins to his ambition. In a letter to his father he writes that in all probability his success has saved the Company, and that it is his wish to be appointed Governor-General of India.[2]

[1] Vol. II., p. 123.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CAPTURE OF CHANDERNAGORE.

'An unexpressible blow to the French Company.'—CLIVE.[1]

WE have seen that even before the siege of Calcutta the French were reported by the British spies to have given assistance to the Nawab, that a number of deserters from their military force served him under the command of a French ex-officer, and that the reports sent home by the French of the quarrel with the Nawab were considered by the British to be not only unfriendly, but untrue.[2] On the other hand, those of the British who had been captured by the Nawab's forces and made over to the French, or who had escaped to Chandernagore direct, had met with the most humane treatment. In other words, there existed in Bengal between French and British much personal esteem and kindly friendship, combined with an almost exaggerated commercial and political hostility. The reinforcements sent from Madras came animated by feelings much more uniform in nature, for in the last war Madras had been captured by the French, and the instructions[3] sent to Lally by the East India Company had been intercepted and showed that the French intended to behave with the utmost severity if they were successful. In the mind of every soldier, as in that of Clive, there was the hope that, the native Government once beaten and rendered powerless to interfere, they might be able to strike another blow at their old enemy France.

What had M. Renault and the French in Bengal to rely on? The personal gratitude of a few individuals not of the highest

[1] Vol. II., p. 307.

[2] Their comments on the British after the capture of Calcutta were so extravagantly unjust that the Prussian Agent, Mr. Young, was disgusted with them (Vol. I., p. 63).

[3] Orme MSS., O.V., 27, pp. 29-33.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

rank,[1] and the neutrality which had been customary in Bengal. Everyone knows for how little personal considerations count in national quarrels, and as regards the neutrality, a nation that had not observed it in the South of India had no right to complain if its enemy infringed it in the East. The French, conscious of their weakness, fully expected this, as we see from the letters of Messrs. Renault, Bausset, and Fournier,[2] and Law asked himself, 'What confidence could people have in a neutrality which had only been observed out of fear of the Nawabs?'[3] If the Nawab had been once well beaten by the British, Law would have accepted the position, and formed an alliance with Sirāj-uddaula, in spite of the insults the latter had been pouring upon the Europeans since his conquest of Calcutta.[4] Law's was without doubt the wiser policy from a commercial point of view, for as long as the French could keep a footing in Bengal, however humble it might be, they might hope for better times. This might be allowed them by the Nawab, but would certainly not be permitted by the British. M. Renault, Director of Chandernagore, and Chief of the French in Bengal, was unable to agree to the strong measures proposed by Law, for though he had heard early in December, 1756, from the Surat Factory that war had been declared in Europe on the 17th May,[5] he had no power to declare war against the British in Bengal without the consent of the Superior Council at Pondicherry, and even if he acted without this authority he would be running a great risk with the small garrison[6] at his disposal. As the Nawab could be convinced of the loyalty of the French only by some overt act on their part against the British, it is clear that M. Renault was in a position from which it was almost impossible to extricate himself with either safety or honour. There appeared, however, one gleam of hope, and this was the fact that even after the arrival of the British squadron French ships were not only allowed to pass without molestation,[7] but their salutes were courteously returned.[8] It seemed as if the British wished for a neutrality.

December, 1756.

[1] Vol. I., pp. 48, 59, 68.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 206, 229, and Vol. III., p. 244.
[3] Vol. III., p. 178.
[4] Vol. I., p. 210, and Vol. III., p. 175.
[5] Vol. II., p. 59.
[6] One hundred and forty-six men (Vol. III., p. 244).
[7] Vol. II., pp. 59, 115.
[8] Vol. III., p. 4.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

It has been said that one of the pretexts of the war between the Nawab and the British had been the erection of fortifications by the latter, and that immediately after his accession he had sent orders to both French and British to desist from making fortifications and to pull down all new ones. The French, according to Holwell,[1] having completed their Fort by the erection of the remaining bastion, were able to desist immediately, and to inform the Nawab that they had made no new ones, whilst the Nawab's messengers, being well treated,[2] in other words bribed, made so favourable a report that he said nothing more about the matter. When Sirāj-uddaula had taken Calcutta, and there seemed every probability of the French having to fight him in their turn, Renault thought it necessary to examine into the condition of his artillery, and managed, with some difficulty, to get it into a state of efficiency. His garrison was weak, but fortunately the French East Indiaman, *Saint Contest*, had come into port, and the captain, De la Vigne Buisson, was ordered to stay and add his crew to the defenders of the Fort. In those days all sailors knew how to handle guns, and De la Vigne Buisson and his men took charge of the artillery and formed the most efficient portion of the garrison. The Nawab, after his return from Purneah, seems to have abandoned his suspicions of the French, or at any rate to have thought the lesson he had given them in his treatment of the British would prevent them from attempting any resistance to his commands, and so did not pay much attention to what they were doing. Accordingly, even before he heard from Surat that war had actually broken out, M. Renault began to clear the ground round the Fort by destroying some of the houses to the north which, like those round Fort William, were so close as to command it.[3] It was probably to cover this that on the 10th December he sent news to the *Faujdār* of Hugli that a British squadron had arrived, or was about to arrive, in the river.[4] This news must, I think, have reached him by the *Danae*, a French ship which had just arrived at Chandernagore.[5]

Such was the state of affairs when Watson and Clive came up the Hugli. From Culpee it is probable that Watson wrote to

[1] Vol. II., p. 8, and Vol. III., p. 164. [2] Vol. III., p. 165.
[3] Vol. I., p. 307. [4] Vol. II., p. 68. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Renault as he had done to Bisdom, but the French Chief apparently made no reply until Calcutta had been retaken and the expedition to Hugli was just about to start. He went on clearing away the houses round the Fort,[1] and, still in ignorance of the British re-capture of Calcutta,[2] two French deputies, Laporterie and Sinfray, were despatched, and on the 4th January[3] found the British in possession of the town. They congratulated the Admiral on his success, and inquired his intentions regarding the maintenance of neutrality in Bengal.[4] It must be here observed that though the French had positive news from Surat of the outbreak of war and its proclamation at Bombay, Watson did not receive word of this from Madras till the 12th January.[5] He must, however, have been certain that the news was on its way, and as the French had raised the question of neutrality, he naturally presumed that the Chief and Council at Chandernagore had authority to negotiate. Accordingly, though he asserted that the French had broken the neutrality in the last war and had lately assisted the Nawab,[6] he offered them an alliance, offensive and defensive, against the Nawab.[7] They said this was impossible, and the Admiral replied that in that case

4th January, 1757.

> 'he would be forced to try his luck.'[8]

On the 6th January the Select Committee at Calcutta heard from Mr. Surgeon Forth, who was still at Chinsurah, that Coja Wājid had received news from Surat of the public proclamation of war at Bombay, and that the French were busy fortifying Chandernagore.[9] This is probably the first definite news received by the British, for the next day the Select Committee resolved to write to Admiral Watson asking him to arrange for a neutrality with the French; but they did not actually send their letter until the 10th, and by that time the French deputies had already taken their departure. On the 12th Admiral Watson replied somewhat angrily that he had offered the French an alliance offensive and defensive, and that he could not, consistently with his duty, modify these terms. On the other hand, he said he would commit no breach of neutrality as long as there was any danger of such action

6th January, 1757.

12th January, 1757.

[1] Vol. II., p. 87. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 114. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[4] Vol. III., p. 269. [5] Vol. II., p. 200. [6] *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 115.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 101. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 119. [9] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

being harmful to the interests of the Company.[1] In accordance with these sentiments, when on the same day he received copies of His Majesty's Declaration of War against France, he wrote to ask the Committee whether they would prefer a simple neutrality, an alliance offensive and defensive, or war with the French.[2] The Select Committee replied two days later that they would prefer the first.[3] 14th January, 1757.

The French, on the dismissal of their first envoys by Admiral Watson, had been in a state of great uncertainty as to what they should do, and when the British on the 9th sailed by the French Factory, on their way to Hugli, without saluting their flag, it was only the sense of the weakness of their forces which prevented them from firing on the ships. Towards the end of January the Nawab asked Renault to mediate between him and the British, and thinking that if his good offices were accepted it would be possible for him to insert in the Treaty an article guaranteeing neutrality amongst the Europeans in Bengal, Renault willingly accepted the task.[4] But, as we have seen in the last chapter, the British, after some discussion, ultimately refused the proffered mediation, and the Deputies were about to return disappointed, when the British, in accordance with their letter of the 14th to the Admiral, asked them to reopen the question of the neutrality. Law is probably perfectly correct in saying that the object of the Select Committee was to prevent a junction between the French and the Nawab; on the other hand, their present proposal may well have been an honest one, as they knew they were too weak to fight the French and the Nawab together. The deputies wrote to Chandernagore for instructions, but were ordered to return.[5] The Nawab was close upon Chandernagore, and M. Renault thought it unwise to incense him by open negotiations with the British, whilst, on the other hand, he could not join him, as he had just received a letter, dated 28th November, 1756,[6] from M. de Leyrit, President of the Superior Council of Pondicherry, forbidding the only course of action which could have secured the alliance of the Nawab, yet ordering Renault to fortify Chandernagore and put the town in a condition to ensure it from being taken by sudden assault. De Leyrit sent Renault only advice—no money to carry it out, and

[1] Vol. II., p. 101. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 103. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 105.
[4] Vol. III., p. 246. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 181. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 270.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

practically no reinforcements. One does not know whether it was mere folly on De Leyrit's part, or whether it was because he had no control over the French military—still, it must strike everyone as extraordinary that the British, who in Madras were inferior in men and money, should send so strong a force under their best fighting captain to Bengal, whilst the French, with their numerical superiority, could not spare even 100 Europeans[1] to protect the source from which Pondicherry and the French islands drew great part of their provisions and the major part of their trade.[2]

Meanwhile, the Nawab pursued his course to Calcutta, and his army was utterly demoralized by the skirmish of the 5th February.

9th February, 1757. Then followed the Treaty of the 9th, in which no mention was made of the French, and it was well understood that in his private letters to Watson and Clive, by asserting that he would have the same friends and enemies as the British, Sirāj-uddaula had given a kind of assent to the latter attacking Chandernagore. According to a Memoir of the time,[3] the day after the Treaty was signed with the Nawab news arrived of the war between Britain and France. As we have seen, it had been known to the Select Committee and to the Admiral nearly a month earlier, but it was now first allowed to be publicly announced, and the French were forced to make a final decision. In fact, the Select Committee pressed the Admiral to attack at once. He replied that the wording of the Nawab's private letters did not justify him in doing so; that owing to the great loss of men by sickness he must be supplied with reinforcements; and, lastly, that the ships could not be moved up the river until after the spring tides. The matter was therefore dropped for the time.

As the Nawab passed Chandernagore, humbled by his defeat, he sent friendly messages to M. Renault, repaid 1 *lakh* of rupees on account of the 3 *lakhs* which he had extorted the previous year, gave the French a *parwāna* granting them all the privileges enjoyed by the British, including those extorted from him by the recent Treaty, and even offered them the town of Hugli if they would ally themselves with him.[4] They accepted the money, but either

[1] Vol. III., p. 244.
[2] Vol. II., p. 340.
[3] 'Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal, compiled from the Papers of Mr. Watts,' p. 27.
[4] Vol. II., p. 301, and Vol. III., p. 229.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

declined the alliance outright or merely promised to resist any attempt of the British to come up the river. Both the Dutch and the British fully believed that the French had entered into a secret alliance,[1] and the British felt that if they were ever to settle finally with the Nawab they must first crush the French. The latter, therefore, must be held in play until steps had been taken at Murshidabad to prevent the Nawab from interfering. Consequently, when on the 19th M. Renault reopened the negotiations for a neutrality, the British replied that they would consent only if the Council at Chandernagore were authorized to conclude an agreement which would be binding on the Superior Council at Pondicherry and on the French King's officers. It seems on the face of it absurd that such a condition should be suggested after two months' negotiations, yet upon examination it was found that M. Renault and his Council had no such authority. The French accused the British of having trifled with them, but for people to propose a treaty which they know they have no authority to conclude is not exactly plain dealing, though it may be good diplomacy. It was the French who first proposed a neutrality. 19th February, 1757.

The reason for the Nawab's condescension to the French when passing Chandernagore was not merely pique and the desire for revenge upon the British. Either M. Renault or M. Law, with whom he entered into negotiations immediately after his arrival at Murshidabad, had informed him that Bussy with a strong force was marching upon Bengal. This information, which no doubt the French believed, was to be used later on with fatal effect against them. The Nawab wrote to Bussy for assistance.[2]

We must now retrace our steps a little. One of the conditions privately accepted by the Nawab at the time of the Treaty of the 9th February was that the British should be represented at his Court by a European. The man chosen was Mr. Watts. From his easy surrender of the Fort at Cossimbazar the Nawab had concluded that he must be a person of feeble character, who might be easily duped, and in his letter to Mr. Pigot speaks of him as

'a helpless, poor, and innocent man.'[3]

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[1] Vol. II., p. 290, and Vol. III., p. 257.
[2] Vol. II., p. 264.
[3] Vol. I., p. 196.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

But Clive and the Council had formed a more correct opinion of his capacity. Scrafton writes:

'Mr. Watts, being very well versed in the country language, and in their politics and customs, accompanied the *Soubah* to attend the fulfilling of the Treaty.'[1]

The choice of Mr. Watts was evidently suggested by the Report of the Council of War, which decided the Select Committee not to renew hostilities, but to send up an Agent to effect their object by diplomacy.[2]

The Select Committee gave Mr. Watts full instructions as to his behaviour.

'As many things have been omitted in this Treaty, and as some require explaining to prevent future causes of disputes and evasions,'

he was to apply to the Nawab on the following matters:

1. The privileges granted by the Emperor were to be entered in the Emperor's books; strict obedience to them to be publicly ordered; the villages granted to the British by the *Farmān* to be delivered to them.

2. The Article of the Mint to be explained and extended.

3. The British to be allowed to punish any of the Nawab's officers infringing their *dastaks*, without waiting to complain to the *Darbār*.

4. Strict inquiries to be made into the losses of the Company's servants and private Europeans, and restitution made either by the Nawab or those of his principal men who had plundered the Europeans without his knowledge. Any servants of the Company who had taken advantage of the Troubles to defraud the Company to be arrested. Mānik Chand to refund the fines he had inflicted.

5. In case restitution for private losses were refused, the Nawab to pay all debts due by the British to his people.

6. The Courts of Justice established by the Company's Charter to be allowed by the native Government.

7. European Agents of the Company to be received politely at the *Darbār*, and without being required to make any presents to the Nawab or his officers.

8. The Nawab to erect no fortifications on the river below Calcutta.

[1] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 68. [2] Vol. II., p. 222.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

9. The Patna Factory to be reopened without payment of any present to the *Darbār*.

10. The Nawab to order his officers to restore all books, papers, and accounts belonging to the British.[1]

With Mr. Watts, as his adviser and agent, went Omichand.[2] Ever since the expulsion of the British from Calcutta it seems that Omichand had being doing his best to provide a remedy for his own miscalculation of his influence over the Nawab. Captain Mills tells us he gave food to some of the refugees, and he very quickly entered into communications with the Secret Committee[3] at Fulta by means of Coja Petrus and Abraham Jacobs. It was by his advice that they sent letters to Mānik Chand, Coja Wājid, Jagat Seth, and Rāi Durlabh, for the favourable reception of which he prepared the way. He constantly sent information to the Committee, but when it was first rumoured that the British were returning he betook himself to Murshidabad. On the 20th January[4] his goods in Calcutta were sequestered on suspicion of treason, and apparently, though sent down by the Nawab to Calcutta, he was himself put under confinement. On the 28th January Omichand wrote to Clive to entreat his favour.[5] This Clive granted soon after, and the Committee seem to have released Omichand, on his good behaviour, to accompany Mr. Watts.[6] When Mr. Watts arrived at Hugli on the 17th February he sent Omichand to see the *Faujdār*, Nandkumār.[7] The latter informed him of all the transactions between the Nawab and the French,[8] and was easily brought over to the British interest. On the 21st Watts arrived in camp, and had an audience with the Nawab.[9] He immediately bribed Rājārām, the Nawab's head spy, and ascertained from him the Nawab's secret intentions,[10] and also that the British could only hope to govern the Nawab through his timidity, as he had not the slightest intention of fulfilling his promises.[11]

17th February, 1757.

[1] Vol. II., pp. 225-227. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[3] See Consultations of Secret Committee, India Office, *passim*.

[4] Public Proceedings, 20th January, 1757.

[5] Vol. II., p. 174. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[7] Nandkumār was only officiating as Faujdār. His object in intriguing with the British was to obtain his confirmation.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 228, and Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 29.

[9] Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 31. [10] *Ibid.*, p. 33. [11] Vol. II., p. 255.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The errand Mr. Watts had been sent upon was a very difficult one; he had not merely to obtain the fulfilment of the Treaty, but to have it interpreted in the most generous manner possible, and also to contrive the Nawab's acceptance of several other articles which, if they had been touched on at all, were not included in the actual Treaty.[1] He found himself strongly opposed by the French, who were indebted to Jagat Seth to the extent of £70,000, so that nothing could be done at Murshidabad against their influence except

'in the mode of the Court—that is, by opposing corruption to corruption, making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and getting upon even grounds with those with whom we were obliged to contend.'[2]

Finding this the only means of doing business at Murshidabad, and being further advised thereto by Omichand, Mr. Watts seems to have had no hesitation in playing the game in the Oriental style.

18th February, 1757. On the 18th February Clive had crossed his army over the Hugli to be ready to march upon Chandernagore, if the Nawab's permission could only be obtained. This had forced Renault to act, and on the 19th he wrote, reopening the question of neutrality. His proposals were received on the 21st in Calcutta, and on the 22nd came letters from the Nawab to Watson and Clive forbidding them to attack the French, and asserting on French[3] suggestion that the British were only waiting for the Rains to attack him in Murshidabad. He therefore demanded they should dismiss their ships of war. The suggestion that the rainy reason would mark the recommencement of hostilities was extremely plausible, for everyone who had considered the question—Scot,[4] Rannie,[5] and Grant[6]—had pointed out the facility with which the country might be overrun by means of the rivers during that season. Council thereupon promised to obey the Nawab and open negotiations for a neutrality, but they wrote to Mr. Watts to impress upon the Nawab the faithlessness and untrustworthiness of the French. Whilst the Nawab was writing to the British not to interfere with the French, he was restrained from

[1] Vol. II., p. 225.

[2] Watts' 'Memoirs of the Revolution,' p. 27. N.B.—There are two editions of this book—1761 and 1764.

[3] Vol. II., pp. 229, 230.

[4] Plan for the conquest of Bengal (Orme MSS., vol. vi., 1487-1499).

[5] Vol. III., p. 391.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 383.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

sending a force under Mīr Jafar to assist the latter only by the craft of Omichand, who explained that it was the French who were the real aggressors, and not the British; that the latter sincerely desired peace, whilst the former were calling Bussy into the country to break it. This crafty argument convinced the Nawab for the moment, and he dismissed Hakīm Beg and others of the anti-British faction from his Court. This was satisfactory so far, but on the 25th February Watts wrote to Calcutta that it was impossible to rely upon the Nawab, and that it would be wise to attack Chandernagore without delay, as, influenced by Mānik Chand and Coja Wājid, the Nawab had again ordered Mīr Jafar to march. This advice arrived in Calcutta on the 28th whilst the British and French were still discussing the powers of M. Renault and his Council to sign a treaty binding upon their nation. On the 4th March the Admiral declared himself dissatisfied, and refused to sign the Treaty[1] which had already been drawn up.[2] Clive was in despair, for the Admiral would not make a treaty with the French because M. Renault had not power to sign one, and he would not attack Chandernagore because he had not obtained the Nawab's permission. Accordingly, on the 5th March he submitted a request to the Select Committee to allow him to return to Madras, as he considered it disgraceful to negotiate with the French if the negotiations were not intended to result in peace. When the Admiral refused to sign the Treaty the French immediately wrote to that effect to the Nawab, published a manifesto, and sent away their women and children to Chinsurah.[3] The Nawab ordered a force under Rāi Durlabh to march at once.

25th February, 1757.

4th-5th March, 1757.

On the 6th, as the Admiral was still immovable, it was formally debated in Council whether the British should attack Chandernagore or not,[4] and Council decided to postpone all consideration of the Treaty until the Nawab had been appealed to again, as he had written to Clive explaining that the troops sent to Hugli were not to assist the French, but to keep order in the town, and to inform him that the Emperor's army was about to invade Bengal.

6th March, 1757.

[1] Vol. II., p. 268. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

[3] Vol. III., p. 258. I have not been able to find a copy of the manifesto. The women, according to Clive, were nearly sixty in number (Vol. II., p. 302).

[4] For Clive's account of this debate, see Vol. III., p. 311.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The Nawab wrote that he proposed to march to Azimabad (Patna), and asked Clive to accompany him, offering him a *lakh* of rupees a month for his expenses.[1] Only one member of the Council voted for the neutrality. This was Mr. Becher, who had been so kindly treated by the French when forced to surrender his Factory at Dacca.

At the same time, the Admiral had written on the 4th February in terms of great anger to the Nawab, using words which vividly recall Alīvirdī's prophecy. He demanded that every article of the Treaty should be fulfilled in ten days,

'otherwise, remember, you must answer for the consequences; and as I have always acted the open, unreserved part in all my dealings with you, I now acquaint you that the remainder of my troops, which should have been here long since (and which I hear the Colonel told you he expected), will be at Calcutta in a few days; that in a few days more I shall despatch a vessel for more ships and more troops; and that *I will kindle such a flame in your country as all the water in the Ganges shall not be able to extinguish.* Farewell. Remember that he promises you this who never yet broke his word with you or with any man whatsoever.'[2]

Clive had already written on the 25th February urging Watts to procure definite permission from the Nawab, and pointing out that without this neither he nor the Admiral could with honour break the peace in Bengal.[3] Whether it was the bold words used by Watson, or, as the story goes, the craft of Omichand that overcame the Nawab's resistance cannot be known. What is said to have happened is, that when asked by Sirāj-uddaula why the Admiral had refused to sign the Treaty, Omichand replied that he had been enraged at the duplicity of the French in pretending to negotiate a treaty which they had no authority to sign. When this matter was discussed in the Nawab's presence by Messrs. Watts and Law, the Nawab proposed to write again to the Admiral. Law recklessly remarked that the Admiral would not pay any attention to his letters.[4] The Nawab's vanity was wounded, and in a fit of passion he ordered his Secretary to write to the Admiral permitting him to attack the French. The Secretary, who was in Mr. Watts' pay, wrote the letter immediately; it was

[1] Vol. II., p. 270. The Nawab had made the same offer to the Admiral on the 22nd February (Vol. II., p. 242).

[2] Vol. II., p. 273. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 245. [4] Vol. III., p. 195.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

brought to the Nawab, and sealed and despatched at once.[1] This fatal letter, dated the 10th March, concluded as follows: 10th March, 1757.

'You have understanding and generosity; if your enemy, with an upright heart, claims your protection, you will give him his life; but then you must be well satisfied of the innocence of his intentions; if not, whatever you think right that do.'[2]

M. Law says boldly that this letter was not written by the Nawab's orders,[3] but the letter was actually written and bore the Nawab's seal. The words quoted referred very clearly to the reasons Omichand had given for the Admiral's refusal to sign the Treaty, and justified Admiral Watson in the action he took. He must have received it on the 11th or 12th, and on the latter day wrote to the Select Committee saying he had received a copy of His Majesty's Declaration of War, *with orders from the Admiralty to put it into execution*, and accordingly would send up his ships as soon as the state of the river permitted. 11th-12th March, 1757.

We have referred to the Nawab's request to Clive to join him at Patna. This gave Clive an excuse for starting, and accordingly he joined his troops on the 3rd March. On the 7th he wrote that he would assist the Nawab with pleasure; that it was dangerous to leave such enemies as the French in his rear; accordingly, it would be better to dispose of them first, and that he would wait at Chandernagore for instructions. On the 8th he wrote to Nandkumār,[4] *Faujdār* of Hugli, to inform him that he was coming, and to ask for provisions, and on the 11th the Nawab wrote to say he had heard from Nandkumār with pleasure of his intention to visit him.[5] This letter, as it were, corroborated that received by the Admiral.

On the 8th March the French deputies, Messrs. Fournier, Nicholas, and Le Conte, had been sent back to Chandernagore with a fresh proposal, evidently intended to draw out the negotiations a little longer. There they remained until the fighting began. 8th March, 1757.

About this time[6] the British, whose weakness had been the

[1] Watts' 'Memoirs,' pp. 38, 39. [2] Vol. II., p. 279.

[3] Vol. III., p. 191 note. Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 70.

[4] Nandkumār promised to withdraw his troops from Chandernagore (Vol. II., p. 280).

[5] Vol. II., p. 280. [6] Between the 4th and 11th March.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

original cause of their entering upon negotiations with the French, had been reinforced by troops from Bombay. These consisted of 400 men,[1] and brought up Clive's forces to 700 Europeans and 1,600 sepoys.[2] The *Cumberland*[3] also had at last arrived in the Hugli, and, as she carried 300 soldiers, the British may well have thought that they were strong enough to meet all their enemies together; but that curious despondency which seemed to attack Clive so often on the eve of great events showed itself even now, and on the 11th he wrote to his friend Orme in Madras to send all his money to Bengal in time to be remitted to England by the September ships. He seems to have realized that he was entering on what might be a long campaign, that he could not get back to Madras, and he knew only too well how weak the British were in Southern India.[4] If Bussy had attacked Madras or left a small force in the south and marched with the rest to Bengal he might have changed the whole course of events.

To oppose Clive there were, besides the French garrison at Chandernagore, some 10,000 men under Rāi Durlabh at Plassey, 4,000 or 5,000 men under Mānik Chand still nearer, and a strong garrison under Nandkumār at Hugli; but the latter had already been brought over to the British interest by Omichand, and though he sent 2,000 men to Chandernagore, they were of no great service to the French. At Murshidabad the French were supported by a small party carefully formed by Law.[5] Amongst his friends he numbered Rāi Durlabh, Coja Wājid, and Mohan Lāl. The first boasted himself the conqueror of the British at Calcutta, but his exploits at the skirmish of Chitpur had been limited to sharing in the flight, and he was now terrified at the idea of fighting Clive again. The second, Coja Wājid, was an excessively timid man. Probably at heart he preferred the French, and certainly spoke in their favour in the *Darbār* whenever he could; but he had not forgotten his losses when the British plundered his house at Hugli, and lest worse should befall him at their hands he betrayed to Clive the correspondence between the French and the Nawab. The third, Mohan Lāl, Law describes as an extremely able man, but a thorough scoundrel. He was very ill

[1] Vol. III., p. 47. [2] Vol. II., p. 310, and Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 43.
[3] Vol. III., p. 247. [4] Vol. II., p. 279. [5] Vol. III., pp. 189-191.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

at this time, it was supposed from poison administered by his rivals. Thus the one man upon whom the Nawab relied to confirm and support his vacillating resolution was unable at this most critical moment even to speak to his master. By a strange irony of Fate he recovered, as we shall see, only so far as to be able to do a fatal injury to Sirāj-uddaula. In the British interest there seem to have been engaged all the more reputable members of the Court, though Law[1] was probably anticipating when he placed among them Jafar Alī Khān, Khudādād Khān Lātī, and the Seths. As far as can be seen, these persons were disaffected to the Nawab, but it was Omichand who acted as the Agent of the British, and as long as he remained so the Seths and their friends were not likely to be very hearty in the support of the British, even though it was Ranjīt Rāi, their agent, who had negotiated the Treaty of the 9th February for the Nawab. Law, however, visited the Seths, and from some incautious expressions learned that they were already planning the setting up of another Nawab. This he confided to Sirāj-uddaula, who only laughed at his discovery.[2]

It was under these difficulties that Law struggled at Murshidabad to obtain the Nawab's support for the French at Chandernagore. As he says pathetically, the Seths

'managed so well that they undid in the evening all that I had effected in the morning';[3]

and behind the Seths was always Mr. Watts.

We must now leave Calcutta for Chandernagore. Clive's forces broke up camp on the 8th March.[4] The French were immediately informed of this, and wrote to demand an explanation of Clive's approach to their town. He replied on the 9th: 8th March, 1757.

'I have no intention of acting offensively against your nation at present; whenever I have, you may be assured I shall frankly acquaint you with it.'[5]

On the 11th Clive charged the French with entertaining deserters from the British. On the 12th he encamped two miles to the westward of Chandernagore, and the next day, having determined to attack the French, sent in a summons to M. Renault to surrender. No reply was given, so on the 14th Clive read the 11th-14th March, 1757.

[1] Vol. III., p. 191. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 194. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 192.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 47. [5] Vol. II., p. 277.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Declaration of War to his troops, and began the siege by an attack on an outpost to the south-west of the Fort.[1]

The Fort of Chandernagore was by no means prepared to stand a siege, though Renault had done all that was in his power, destitute as he was of men and money, and without even a qualified engineer to advise him in the matter of fortifications.[2] The artillery he had managed to put in order,[3] and ammunition had been purchased with the *lakh* of rupees which the Nawab had paid him after his defeat by the British on the 5th February. His garrison, however, was hopelessly inadequate against a European enemy. In August, 1756, it consisted of only 85 Europeans, most of whom were foreigners, and not to be relied upon in a difficulty,[4] and though he wrote repeatedly to Pondicherry for reinforcements,[5] he received only 167 sepoys and 61 Europeans.[6] The foreign element amongst the Europeans was increased by a number of deserters from the British service, who enlisted with him after the fall of Calcutta, and he was able to form a company of Grenadiers of 50, one of Artillery of 30, and one of Marine of 60. To these he added a body of volunteers drawn from the Company's servants and the European and half-caste community. After the loss of 10 men at the outpost first attacked by Clive, Renault found he had 237 soldiers (including 45 French pensioners and sick), 120 sailors, 70 half-castes and private Europeans, 100 Company's servants (merchants and ships' officers), 167 sepoys, and 100 topasses or half-caste gunners, forming a total of 794 fighting men of all ranks.[7] The foreigners and deserters were not good material, and would give no assistance in completing the fortifications,[8] whilst at the first sign of hostilities all the country people had deserted the colony.[9]

The insufficiency of men was made more serious by the natural

[1] Renault asserts (Vol. II., p. 302) that on the very day he made his attack Clive wrote to the Nawab that he did not intend to attack the French. The best proof that this was not so is that Law makes no mention of the Nawab receiving any such letter. Had Clive done so, Law would certainly have been acquainted with it.

[2] Vol. III., p. 268.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

[4] Vol. I., p. 209, and Vol. III., p. 267.

[5] Vol. I., p. 211.

[6] Vol. III., p. 244.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 272. Watts ('Memoir,' p. 42) gives the garrison as 500 whites and 700 blacks.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

but unwise wish to defend the town, which led to a great waste of time in erecting outposts and barriers in the principal streets at some distance from the Fort,[1] which might have been better expended on the Fort itself. The latter was commanded by a number of houses, many of which Renault began to pull down as early as November, 1756,[2] but sufficient were still left to enable the British musketeers to command the men at the guns. This was a fatal defect, for the French had omitted to strengthen the eastern curtain, which was the weakest part[3] of the Fort, under the impression that, by sinking some vessels in a narrow passage below, they could effectually prevent the approach of the British warships, and so in the terrible fight against Watson's squadron the French sailors were shot down at their guns. The work of sinking these ships was begun as early as the 13th of March.[4] The passage itself was beyond the range of the guns of the Fort, but was covered by a small battery on the bank.

Clive's attack was not very vigorous. He knew that the Admiral would bring up his ships, and that an attempt to take the place by the land force only, which was unsupplied with siege-guns, would only result in a heavy loss of life. Accordingly, he limited his efforts to driving in the outposts, which was effected on the night of the 14th. On hearing of this, Nandkumār wrote to the Nawab that the place was taken, and that the French were quite unable to resist the British. This information counter-balanced any representation that Law could make as to the necessity of the Nawab reinforcing the French in his own interests, and, though he wavered from time to time, orders to march were issued only to be immediately countermanded, and nothing was actually done to save the Fort. After the loss of the outposts, the French found themselves deserted by the 2,000 Moors who had been sent by Nandkumār.[5] The quarrel was to be fought out by the French alone,[6] and Clive's whole object was to deprive them of all assistance from outside, to harass

14th March, 1757.

[1] Vol. III., p. 230. [2] Vol. I., p. 307. [3] Vol. III., p. 232.
[4] Vol. II., p. 285. [5] Other accounts say they volunteered.
[6] I think some of the Moors must have remained with the French, for Renault's figure of 167 sepoys is very much below that given in all the English accounts—e.g., Eyre Coote (Vol. III., p. 50) says the French had 500 Europeans and 500 blacks.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

them in every way, and keep them constantly on the alert, so as to prepare for the real attack by the ships.

Though there was not sufficient water in the river for the larger vessels, the Admiral had on the 12th sent up the *Bridgewater* and *Kingfisher*, which arrived at Cowgachi, three miles below
15th March, 1757. Chandernagore, on the 15th. Clive immediately informed the senior officer, Captain Toby, that the French had sunk four ships and a hulk below the Fort, and had placed a chain and boom across the passage. That night Lieutenant Bloomer cut the chain, and brought off a sloop that buoyed it up. The same day the *Tyger* (Captain Latham), the *Kent* (Captain Speke), and the *Salisbury*
19th March, 1757. (Captain Martin) left Calcutta. On the 19th they arrived at the Prussian Octagon. In the night Lieutenant Colville with all the boats of the fleet went up above the Fort, boarded the French vessels, and towed them ashore so as to prevent their being used as fireships. Some of the French ships—*e.g.*, Captain de la Vigne's *Saint Contest*—had already been destroyed by the French themselves, as they had not sufficient men to fight them, and did not wish them to fall into the hands of the British.

The tides were not yet favourable for the further movement of the big ships, and it was necessary to examine the passage which the French had blocked. Fortunately, this had been done very imperfectly. News of the approach of the *Bridgewater* and *Kingfisher*, or the presence of Clive's army on the shore, had prevented the French pilots from sinking two large Company's ships, which would have completed their work,[1] and the masts of those they had sunk showed above water. There is a story that the secret of the passage was betrayed to the British by Lieutenant de Terraneau,[2] a French officer who had lost his arm in the French service in Southern India. He had quarrelled with Renault, and on the evening of the 17th took advantage of Clive's offers of pardon to deserters who would return to their duty and of rewards to officers who would go over to him. He was the only French artillery

[1] Vol. III., p. 259.

[2] 'Seir Mutaqherin.' This story is corroborated on I think insufficient grounds by Malleson.

As this goes to press I have received a letter from Mr. J. A. G. Gilmour, who, being then about ten years old, lived in 1845 or 1846 next door to the son, then an old man of eighty, of this Lieutenant de Terraneau. The old gentleman was in receipt of a small pension from the East India Company.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

officer, and so his desertion was a serious loss to his countrymen; but there was no secret connected with the passage to betray, for when Lieutenant Hey was despatched on the morning of the 20th by the Admiral with a summons to Renault to surrender, he rowed between the masts of the sunken vessels, and observed that ships could pass easily if only they were well handled. Renault and the Council, misled by the small damage done to the Fort by Clive's continuous bombardment, and trusting that the passage had been effectually blocked, declined to surrender, but offered to ransom the town and Fort. The Admiral refused to accept these terms, and on the night of the 20th Mr. John Delamotte, master of the *Kent*, buoyed the passage under a heavy fire. On the 21st Admiral Pocock, who had left the *Cumberland* at Hijili, and in his eagerness to share in the fighting had come up in his barge, joined the Admiral, and hoisted his flag on the *Tyger*. On the 22nd the tides served too late in the afternoon to suit the ships, and it was therefore determined to attack early next morning. During the night lights were fixed on the masts of the sunken vessels with shades towards the Fort, so that they might act as guides to the ships without being visible to the enemy. About 5 o'clock in the morning of the 23rd March Clive stormed the French battery which commanded the river passage, and the *Tyger*, *Kent*, and *Salisbury* passed the sunken ships without the slightest difficulty. About 7 a.m. the first two placed themselves opposite the north-east[1] and south-east bastions, but the *Salisbury* was unable to take up a position where she could be of much use. The fight was, therefore, left to the *Tyger* and *Kent*, each of which had an Admiral on board. The first broadside they fired drove the French from a battery they had erected on the riverside. They regained the Fort with difficulty, and then for two hours or more there ensued a terrible cannonade between the ships and batteries. The *Kent* was so badly damaged that she was never again fit to go to sea, and the *Tyger* suffered almo t as severely; but the walls of Fort d'Orléans were in ruins, the gunners almost all killed, and the men were being shot down by Clive's musketeers from the roofs of the neighbouring houses.[2]

20th-23rd March, 1757.

[1] Bastion du Pavillon.

[2] 'The enemy had forty killed and seventy wounded in the Fort. They must be allowed to have defended themselves with great spirit and resolution, and probably would not have submitted so soon if they had not suffered severely from Colonel

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Close by the ruined walls Clive's soldiers were lying waiting for the signal to storm, and further defence could be only a useless waste of life. In this single day's fighting the French lost two Captains and 200 other men killed and wounded. About half-past nine Renault hoisted the white flag, and Lieutenant Brereton and Captain Eyre Coote were sent to arrange the surrender. Articles[1] were agreed upon, and were signed by the Admirals and Clive after some objection on Admiral Watson's part to Clive being associated with himself and Admiral Pocock as receiving the surrender.[2] Years later there was much discussion as to whether the land forces could have taken the Fort without the Admiral's assistance,[3] but it is not necessary to discuss this question, as the reasons for Clive's leisurely mode of attack have already been explained.

The British forces lost fully as many men as the French. Clive had been careful not to risk the lives of his soldiers, and so the loss was confined almost entirely to the fleet.[4] Admiral Watson not only showed great personal courage during the fight,[5] but the attack itself was one of great daring. The rise and fall of the tide in the Hugli is very considerable, and it was observed that at ebb the lower tiers of the ships' guns were not available owing to the height of the banks.[6] As the passage between the sunken ships had to be made at high water, it was necessary to take or at least to silence the Fort before the falling tide put the big guns of the ships out of action. A French account says that the Admiral managed to effect his purpose by the narrow margin of half an hour.[7]

On his ship, the *Kent*, the Admiral, in spite of the reckless way[8] in which he had exposed himself, was unhurt, but all the other commissioned officers, except Lieutenant Brereton, were killed or wounded, the Captain being severely, and his son mortally, wounded by the same cannon-ball. In fact, the fire against the *Kent*

Clive's batteries and been still more galled by the fire of his men, which in truth made it almost impossible for them to stand to their guns' (Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 46).

[1] Vol. II., p. 292. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[3] Vol. III., pp. 312, 320, 323, and also Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 46.

[4] The Admiral gives the following figures: The French had 40 killed and 70 wounded, the British 32 killed and 99 wounded (Vol. II., p. 312).

[5] Vol. III., p. 115. [6] Vol. II., p. 131.

[7] Vol. III., p. 265. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

was so heavy that at one moment her crew believed her to be in flames, and were about to leave the ship when they were brought back to their duty by the reproaches of Lieutenant Brereton.[1] On the *Tyger* Admiral Pocock was wounded, and many of the officers, though the ship did not suffer quite so severely as the *Kent*. One of the officers writes that it was impossible to remember any engagement in which two ships had suffered so severely as the *Kent* and *Tyger*.[2] The sailors were exasperated at the fury of the defence and the leniency[3] of the Admiral to the defenders after the fighting was over, because when he had summoned Renault to surrender he had, in order to spare the lives of his own men, offered to allow the French to retain their private property, and yet after so many of these had been killed he granted the French almost as easy terms as he had offered before the fight. The soldiers sent in to garrison the Fort began to beat the coolies whom they saw carrying off what they considered their rightful plunder. It was only by the payment of small sums of money that the French gentlemen succeeded in persuading them to let the coolies pass.[4] Their rage and disappointment impelled the soldiers to plunder whenever they found a chance; the Church plate was carried off and the Treasury broken into. At last Clive found it necessary to hang[5] two or three of the soldiers and sepoys, and then to remove his camp outside the town, so that the men might be out of reach of the *arrack*, or native liquor, which they found in the empty native houses.[6]

Whilst the Capitulation was being arranged two unfortunate events occurred which had very serious consequences for the French, as they were looked upon as breaches of the laws of warfare. The French accidentally, or as the soldiers asserted purposely, set fire to some gunpowder, the explosion of which destroyed a large quantity of valuable goods,[7] and a number of the civilians and soldiers, including most of the deserters from the British, forced their way out of the north gate or Porte Royale, and attempted to escape to Cossimbazar.[8] Some 40 of them succeeded in joining Law; the rest, to the number of

[1] Vol. III., p. 29. See also *Ives' Journal*, p. 129.
[2] Vol. III., p. 27.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 235.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 260.
[6] Vol. II., p. 338.
[7] Vol. III., pp. 12, 28.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

about 100, were shot or captured. The former made up Law's garrison to 60 Europeans. He was also joined by 30 of the sepoys from Chandernagore, whom the British had allowed to leave the town. A little later he received a further reinforcement of an officer and 20 men from Dacca, and though his force was thinned by some desertions, he had when he left Murshidabad at least 100 Europeans and 60 sepoys.[1] His position had at first been very weak, and he had asked the Nawab to send him his flag as a protection against the attempts of Mr. Watts. It was now the turn of the latter to fear violence.

Whilst the British soldiers and sailors were grumbling, and the Dutch[2] wondering at the Admiral's generosity, the French were complaining of the harshness with which they were treated by Colonel Clive. The second article of the Capitulation provided that the officers of the garrison should be liberated on parole; the ninth that the French Company's servants should be permitted to go where they pleased with their clothes and linen. As the Company's servants had taken part in the defence, Clive considered them to be members of the garrison, and before he would allow them to leave the Fort he required them to give their parole not to serve against Britain during the course of the war. According to Clive's account[3] they gave this promise willingly, according to their own under strong protest. They were then permitted to depart, and retired, some to their friends the Danes at Serampore,[4] others to Calcutta; but M. Renault, his Council, and the leading Frenchmen went to Chinsurah, whither they had sent the French ladies and children before the siege. They now, without any regard to the parole they had given to Clive, began to act as if they were still the Council of Chandernagore, and to communicate officially with their up-country Factories and the native Government,[5] and it is quite certain that they gave money and food to some of the French who had escaped from the Porte Royale, and also assisted the enemies of the British in various ways. As soon as Clive was aware of this he demanded that the French should surrender to their parole, and threatened if they refused to take them by force. They appealed to Mr. Bisdom for the protection

[1] Vol. II., pp. 337, 339. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 291. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 361.
[4] Also called Fredericknagar. [5] Vol. II., p. 324.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of the Dutch flag, and were drily told it was none of his business. The British sepoys surrounded the houses where the French were living, and the latter, fearing the ladies might be ill-treated by the sepoys if resistance were attempted, surrendered to the officer in command of the party. They were taken to the camp, but were allowed to go back on parole to arrange about their property.[1] As soon as this had been settled they were conducted to Calcutta, and kept in sufficiently close confinement to prevent their communicating with the Nawab or their up-country Factories.

M. Renault claimed[2] that as the French drew up the articles of Capitulation, they were the best qualified to define their meaning. Clive[3] appealed to common-sense, for it was absurd to suppose that the British would allow their enemies when once captured to go free for the express purpose of renewing their hostility. The facts seem to prove that M. Renault took advantage of the careless good-nature of the Admiral, who signed the terms of Capitulation without any intention except to make them as easy as possible for the conquered, but that when Clive came to represent the damage done to the British by permitting the conquered to interpret the treaty as they pleased, the Admiral allowed Clive and the Select Committee to act as they thought best. They determined, therefore, to take advantage of the breaches of the Capitulation committed by the French themselves, and on the strength of these breaches and the parole they had given after the fall of the Fort, to hold them as prisoners. On the 15th June, after the army had started for Murshidabad, they were allowed the freedom of Calcutta, and on the 4th July to return to their families at Chandernagore.

Whilst the leading French gentlemen were thus confined at Calcutta, the other Frenchmen and the ladies were allowed to reside where they pleased, chiefly at Chandernagore. The French soldiers and sailors were imprisoned, as was the custom of the time, in the common jail. Some months later about fifty of them dug a hole under the wall and escaped. A few made their way to Pondicherry, the rest were killed or captured.

[1] Vol. II., p. 329.

[2] Vol. III., p. 278 *et seq.*

[3] Vol. II., pp. 324-329.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

An entry in the Bengal Public Proceedings[1] records that small rewards, not exceeding 8 or 10 rupees, were made to the families of coolies killed or wounded at Chandernagore,

'for their encouragement to serve on the like occasions in future.'

The capture of Chandernagore was of immense importance to the British. It broke the power of the French in Bengal, and left the way clear for a final settlement with the Nawab. The marine and military stores supplied Calcutta with everything that had been destroyed when that place was lost.[2] Finally, it deprived Pondicherry and the French islands of both provisions and trade.[3] The day the news arrived in London India stock rose 12 per cent.[4]

On the 29th March Clive was joined by the troops sent on board the *Cumberland*,[5] but this reinforcement, though it made him stronger than he had ever been before, did not give him sufficient force to garrison both Chandernagore and Calcutta, and it was still quite possible that the French authorities in Madras would awake to the necessity of recovering Bengal before the British had firmly established themselves in the country.[6] As the French East India Company had also given instructions to Lally[7] not to ransom any English Settlement he might capture, but to destroy all fortifications and to send all the Europeans both civil and military to Europe, and as he had already shown his intention to carry these orders into effect, the British determined to apply the same treatment to the French at Chandernagore. Some time later Fort d'Orléans was blown up,[8] the private houses destroyed, and the Europeans sent to the Madras Coast. The army remained in camp near Chandernagore till the 2nd May.[9]

As soon as Chandernagore was captured a small force under Lieutenant Young[10] was despatched (27th March) to seize the French Factory at Balasore. It returned with the French Chief and the Company's goods on the 24th April.[11]

[1] 7th April, 1757. [2] Vol. II., pp. 302, 307.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 303, 340, and Vol. III., p. 216.
[4] Lloyd's *Evening Post*, 16th-19th September, 1757. [5] Vol. III., p. 51.
[6] Vol. II., pp. 309, 331. [7] Orme MSS., O.V., 27, pp. 20-33.
[8] Its remains were still visible in 1858. The site is now covered by native houses.
[9] Vol. III., p. 51.
[10] Select Committee Proceedings, 28th April, 1757. [11] Vol. III., p. 6.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BREAKING OF THE TREATY.

'The nice and important game that was to be played with the late Nabob.'—CLIVE.[1]

THE Nawab was both incensed and terrified at the capture of Chandernagore. During the siege he had alternately caressed and threatened Mr. Watts.[2] On the 14th March he wrote to inform Clive that the danger from Delhi had disappeared, and that there was no necessity for him to come to Murshidabad.[3] These changes of mood were reflected in the behaviour of the Nawab's subordinates, and at one time Clive found it necessary to threaten Nandkumār and Rāi Durlabh[4] to prevent their interference. Immediately after the British had entered the Fort a detachment had been sent under Major Killpatrick to pursue the French fugitives from Chandernagore, and this the Nawab thought was the vanguard of Clive's army,[5] but as the Major soon halted and then retreated his fears were gradually dissipated. Mr. Watts tells us the Nawab's confusion during the interval had been so great that he sent endless letters to Clive, 14th March, 1757.

'who is said to have received no less than ten of them in one day, and these in very opposite styles, which the Colonel answered punctually with all the calmness and complaisance imaginable, expressing great concern at the impression which the calumnies of his enemies had made on that Prince's mind, and assuring him of his sincere attachment as long as he adhered to the Treaty.'[6]

Now that all was over the Nawab sent Clive a warm letter of congratulation,[7] but it was impossible for so fickle a man to adhere to any settled course. Whilst congratulating Clive he was

[1] Vol. II., p. 442.
[2] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 73.
[3] Vol. II., p. 286.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 286, 288.
[5] Vol. III., p. 200.
[6] Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 48.
[7] Vol. II., p. 295.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

secretly encouraging M. Law, to whom he sent his colours to hoist over the French Factory, and also writing to Bussy.[1] As he had heard so much of the big guns of the ships of war, and was so ignorant as to believe they could ascend the Ganges in order to attack Murshidabad itself, he ordered the channel to be blocked at Suti, where the Cossimbazar River leaves the main stream, and also at Plassey, which is on the high road from Chandernagore to Murshidabad.[2]

Watts now began to press upon the Nawab a new demand from the British[3]—viz., that the French Factories should be surrendered. The Admiral wrote several letters on the subject, but could obtain no satisfactory reply; and after his letter of the 19th April, which was couched in threatening terms,[4] he dropped the correspondence. In fact, the Admiral, though willing enough to fight the French, whom he considered the natural enemies of Britain, and to attack them so long as they remained capable of resistance, thought that to make their affairs the pretext of obtaining further concessions from the Nawab, with whom the British had so recently concluded a peace, was hardly consistent with his honour. But those were days in which even the most honourable men were convinced of the necessity of trickery and chicanery in politics, and were therefore accustomed to give their tacit consent to actions which they would not commit themselves. Consequently the Admiral's position from this time on to the end of the conflict was one of a somewhat disgusted spectator. Clive was more persistent, more clear-headed, and, as a Company's servant, he had more interest and a heavier stake in the matter. On the 29th March he wrote to the Nawab that as long as two nations constantly at war in Europe had rival interests in Bengal, it was certain there never could be peace in that country.[5] There was, as it were, hence-

[1] Vol. II., pp. 294, 313, 314, and Vol. III., p. 199. When the British entered Murshidabad, the Nawab's chief secretary placed his private correspondence in the hands of Clive, and so proved all that had been suspected of his connection with the French (Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 92).

[2] Vol. II., pp. 342, 351. See also Memorandum by Captain Wedderburn (Orme MSS., India, xi., p. 3037).

[3] Vol. II., p. 304.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 344.

[5] Vol. II., p. 305. This argument is repeated in many of Clive's letters—*e.g.*, Vol. II., p. 319.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

forward a double quarrel with the Nawab—in reference to his dilatoriness in fulfilling the terms of the Treaty and the difficulties he made as to the further requests that Mr. Watts had been instructed to urge upon him, and in regard to his behaviour towards the French.

The Nawab fenced cleverly in his replies to Clive's letters, pointing out that the French had settled in the country with the permission of the Emperor, whose revenues would be damaged by their expulsion, and protested against his promise of friendship to the British being interpreted as an engagement to assist them against the French. Finding these excuses useless he then proposed that Clive[1] should put pressure upon M. Renault, who was his prisoner, to give him a written injunction authorizing the Nawab to surrender the French Factories and property up-country to the British on the condition that the latter would make themselves responsible for the payments due from the French to the Emperor. Clive readily accepted the condition,[2] but, as it was impossible for him to put pressure upon a prisoner, he offered to send up a force to seize the French Factories.[3]

At the *Darbār* there was all this time a bitter contest going on between the French and British parties. As both Messrs. Law[4] and Watts[5] confess to the fact, there is no possible doubt that both of them resorted to bribery, though both affirm as an excuse that in so corrupt a Court nothing could be done by any other means. The British Agent, having the deeper purse, was able to influence not only the leading men at Court, but also the Secretaries, and was much assisted by the foresighted cunning of Omichand, for though Law had managed to secure the spies upon whom the Nawab relied for information about the British, Omichand had won over Nandkumār, the *Faujdār* of Hugli, who being, of all the Nawab's officers, in the best position to watch the Europeans, his reassurances as to the intentions of the British were invaluable to the latter[6] at Court. The comparative poverty of the French forced M. Law to use less reputable agents, who in reality damaged his cause, for, having nothing to lose, and caring nothing for the Nawab's interests, they urged him

[1] Vol. II., p. 316. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 338. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 319.
[4] Vol. III., p. 189. [5] Vol. II., p. 323. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

on to the most reckless actions, which discredited him in the eyes even of his own subjects.[1]

For over three weeks after the fall of Chandernagore Law managed to maintain the unequal struggle, though he had to submit to many bitter mortifications, even to that of pulling down the trifling defences he had erected at his Factory.[2] At last, on the 13th April, he was summoned to a final interview with the Nawab and Mr. Watts. The latter begged him to surrender to the British, offering him the most honourable terms, whilst the Nawab told him that the French were the cause of all the troubles between him and the British, and that he did not wish to embroil the country in war for the sake of a nation which had refused him assistance when he asked for it. It seems as if the Nawab had intended to arrest Law at this interview and hand him over to the British; but the timely arrival of a guard of French grenadiers made this impossible without a sanguinary struggle, and his determined and gallant bearing so impressed the vacillating Prince that he gave him permission to retreat towards Patna, in spite of the efforts of Mr. Watts and his friends to force him to march southwards, when he must have fallen into the hands of the British. Sirāj-uddaula even promised to send for him again, but Law mournfully bade him farewell.

13th-16th April, 1757.

'Rest assured, my Lord Nawab, that this is the last time we shall see each other. Remember my words. We shall never meet again. It is nearly impossible.'[3]

16th April, 1757.

Law left Murshidabad on the 16th April,[4] followed by spies instructed to watch his movements and, if possible, seduce his soldiers. He was joined on the march by about forty-five sailors who had escaped from the British, and marched slowly to Bhagulpur. There, on the 2nd May, he received a message of recall from the Nawab; but he suspected the letter to be a forgery intended to entice him into the power of the British, and contented himself with sending back M. Sinfray to see what was happening at Murshidabad. On the 7th he received a letter bidding him halt at Rajmahal; but the place was dangerous, for the *Faujdār*

[1] Vol. II., p. 322.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 317, and Vol. III., p. 201.
[3] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 227.
[4] Vol. III., p. 206.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

was Mīr Dāud,[1] brother of Mīr Jafar, whom Law already suspected of treachery to the Nawab. The same day he arrived at Patna, where he was well received by the Nawab's deputy, Rāmnarāin, to whom the Nawab had written to provide him with all necessaries, though he was at that very time assuring Clive[2] and Watson that Rāmnarāin had been ordered to expel him from his territories. The British were well acquainted with the Nawab's secret actions, for it was Jagat Seth whom the Nawab ordered to supply Law with money, and it was Coja Wājid to whom Law wrote for information as to the movements of his enemies.

Before leaving Murshidabad Law had managed to instil into the Nawab's mind the idea that an attempt would be made by the malcontents in Murshidabad to attack him in his palace, and that they would be supported by the British force at Cossimbazar. There are in the Records vague references to such a plan, but the British at Cossimbazar were too weak to undertake any such enterprise; and consequently when the Nawab, having heard they had 500 men there, demanded permission to examine the Factory, he found only the usual garrison of about fifty men. This served to convince him more firmly of the friendly professions of the British, especially as, in the wish to secure the safety of these men, they gradually withdrew them, and even informed the Nawab they did not wish to refortify the Fort, allowed him to keep the cannon he had taken out of it, and finally assured him they would be satisfied if the French left the country. By a curious perversity of reasoning, this induced him to believe that the British were afraid of venturing so far inland, and in a moment of forgetfulness, or perhaps of passion, he even threatened to impale Mr. Watts if he continued to be so importunate.[3]

[1] Mīr Dāud delayed, and even opened, the letters sent by the Nawab to Rāmnarāin and Law (Vol. III., p. 210).

[2] Vol. II., pp. 330, 334.

[3] Watts' 'Memoir,' pp. 57-67, and Vol. II., pp. 330, 342, 349. Shortly after the Nawab's return to Murshidabad, and before the siege of Chandernagore, the Dutch thought that he had been reduced to such a state of timidity that they might themselves adopt the tone used by the British. They found themselves much mistaken. The Nawab abused their Agent, threatened to have him flogged, and though Jagat Seth and Rāi Durlabb dissuaded him from such severe measures, he had him shut up all night. Mr. Bisdom's letter was torn into pieces, and in that condition

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Shortly before he dismissed M. Law the Nawab sent for the family of Sarfarāz Khān, which had been confined at Dacca ever since the accession of Alīvirdī Khān.[1] Evidently this act had some connection with the expedition planned by the British to seize Dacca in the previous January,[2] and this is possibly the scheme alluded to by Scrafton[3] as an alternative course in case a revolution at Murshidabad failed to be possible. It is, however, characteristic of the Nawab that he should be ignorant of the dangers preparing in his own capital whilst he took precautions against danger far away.

20th April, 1757. On the 20th April the Nawab turned the British Agent[4] out of the Darbār, and on the 21st presented him with a dress of honour. Mr. Scrafton says that this extraordinary behaviour was due to the advice of some of his nobles, including his younger brother and Mānik Chand, who wanted him to be cut off, and so incited him to fresh excesses. Possibly it should be ascribed to the fact that Nandkumār[5] was now tired of waiting for the fulfilment of the promises made by Omichand in the name of the British, and no longer took the trouble to deny the messages sent by the Nawab's spies, as, *e.g.*, one from Mathurā Mal,[6] to the effect that the British intended to attack him in his own palace, and were sending up troops to Murshidabad, which led to his giving orders to stop Captain Grant, who was on his way up to remove the money at the Factory, and his demand to search the Factory which has been already mentioned.[7] Coja Wājid found the state of affairs at Murshidabad so dangerous that he hastily went down to Hugli.[8]

23rd April, 1757. On the 23rd April Clive presented to the Select Committee Mr. Scrafton's letter of the 20th relating the Nawab's extraordinary behaviour to the British Agent. Mr. Scrafton also wrote on the

returned to the Dutch Chief, M. Vernet (Vol. II., p. 276). On the 2nd of April the Dutch Council wrote that, having pressed the Nawab for the restitution of the money extorted in 1756, he had threatened to bastinado them if they did not keep quiet (Vol. II., p. 315). Thus the Nawab's real sentiments towards the British, even when he pretended to be friendly, could be judged by his sudden unguarded outbursts and by his treatment of their allies, the Dutch.

[1] Vol. II., p. 331. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 175. [3] Vol. III., p. 345.
[4] Vol. II., p. 349. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 358. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 365.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 372. [8] *Ibid.*, pp. 362, 375.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

23rd that the Seths had proposed, through Omichand, to set up one Yār Lutf Khān as Nawab.[1] Accordingly, the Committee, seeing that trouble was imminent, recommended that Council should order the up-country Factories to be prepared to send down their goods and money, and should despatch an Agent to Cuttack to watch the movements of Bussy and the Marathas. At the same time Clive was instructed to sound the chief men at Murshidabad as to the possibility of effecting a Revolution.[2]

Yār Lutf Khān was one of the Nawab's up-country officers. Though in the Nawab's service, he drew a monthly allowance from the Seths in return for the protection he gave them.[3] The Seths, who had been the chief means of bringing Alīvirdī to the throne, were not only neglected by Sirāj-uddaula, but treated with contempt and insult, as if they were only common traders. This would not have mattered very much to them if they had not also feared that the avarice of the Nawab would cause them one day or other to be plundered by him. This danger seemed to increase from day to day as the Nawab passed from success to success, and even when he had been defeated at Calcutta in February, 1757, the danger became more imminent owing to the panic-stricken condition of his mind, in which he was ready to suspect anyone who might have power to hurt him. The Seths had advanced large sums of money to the French, and now they found that the Nawab would not assist the latter against the British. It was therefore their interest to strike a bargain with the British, and so protect themselves against any loss by the expulsion of their former clients.

It is not quite certain when they began this intrigue. Clive's earlier letters[4] asking for their assistance had been answered in somewhat haughty terms through their Agent, Ranjīt Rāi,[5] but it was the latter who arranged the treaty of the 9th February, and, according to Mr. Watts, he had contrived to obtain from the Nawab a promise of a *lakh* of rupees for his trouble in the business.[6] This double dealing was characteristic of the Seths'

[1] See p. clxxxiii. [2] Select Committee Proceedings, 23rd April, 1757.

[3] Law (Vol. III., p. 210) says the Seths had brought him to Murshidabad (Stewart, p. 521).

[4] Vol. II., p. 124. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 213. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 381.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

policy. According to M. Law, they incited the British to make the most extravagant demands from the Nawab, and then, with pretended indignation, urged the Nawab not to grant them. It is very difficult to tell how far Sirāj-uddaula did comply with the terms of the Treaty.[1] It is evident from Scrafton's letters that the demands of the British were never definitely stated, and were constantly increasing;[2] and it seems clear that the Nawab actually paid some 30 *lakhs* of rupees as compensation for their losses at Calcutta, but on the other hand the amount of the damages done to the up-country Factories was difficult to estimate exactly, and Mānik Chand was strongly believed to have secreted much of the wealth of Calcutta, for which he had never accounted to the Nawab.[3] The plunder taken by the soldiers had been sold to many persons like Baijnāth,[4] a *dīwān* of the Seths, whom the British, to please the latter, politely excused. It was in reference to these accounts that the Seths were able to give the Nawab trouble. The game was, however, sometimes dangerous, and in one instance a little later on the Seths had to sacrifice their Agent, Ranjīt Rāi, who they said had forged their signature to a document purporting to be written in the Nawab's name.[5]

10th-11th April, 1757.

We must now go back a little. On the 10th April Clive wrote to the Nawab specifying the articles of the Treaty which he had not yet fulfilled. These were:

1. The return of the guns and ammunition seized at Cossimbazar and other up-country factories.

2. The grant of *parwānas* throughout the country for the currency of the Company's business.

3. The currency of the *siccas* coined at Calcutta or Alinagar.

4. The delivery of the thirty-eight villages granted by the Imperial *Farmān*.

5. The restoration of the goods seized at the Factories and *aurāngs* throughout the country.[6]

On the 11th Mr. Watts wrote that the Nawab had demanded

[1] Vol. II., pp. 308, 322, 391.
[2] Vol. III., pp. 342-346.
[3] Vol. II., p. 333.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 318.
[5] Law says he was put to death (Vol. III., p. 208), but he was alive after Plassey (Vol. II., pp. 381, 431). It looks as if the document referred to was a letter to the English Chiefs promising them a sum of money if they would grant the Nawab peace after the fight at Chitpur, but the whole incident is very obscure. See below, p. clxxxvi.
[6] Vol. II., p. 321.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

an acquittance for the Company's property, though he had not yet restored it, and this was all the answer which the Nawab could be persuaded to give to Clive's demands.[1] According to Mr. Watts this was because the French party constantly assured the Nawab of Bussy's speedy arrival, and thus he was encouraged to resist the British claims. He threatened them with war,[2] and, as I have said, on the 20th April ventured to insult the British by turning their *Wakīl* out of his *Darbār*.[3] This brought matters to a crisis, and forced Mr. Watts and Mr. Scrafton to the conclusion that a Revolution was absolutely necessary. Omichand accordingly proposed to the Seths that the British should assist them in overthrowing Sirāj-uddaula and placing Yār Lutf Khān on the throne.[4] At first sight it would appear ridiculous that a person of so little importance should be chosen for such a purpose, but Omichand probably thought that the family of Alīvirdī had risen from a lower position than that occupied by Yār Lutf Khān, that the latter would be pleasing to the Seths as having been in a manner their servant, and, most of all, would be grateful to Omichand as the origin and source of his good fortune. The Seths agreed without any appearance of hesitation to a Revolution, but did not definitely name the Nawab's successor. Their consent was transmitted to Mr. Watts, who, on the 26th April, wrote to Calcutta proposing the Revolution on the ground that the Nawab had no intention of carrying out the Treaty, and that he would take the earliest opportunity of attacking the British, whilst Mīr Jafar had informed him through Coja Petrus[5] that he, Rahīm Khān, Rāi Durlabh, Bahādur Alī Khān, and others[6] were ready to assist the British in overthrowing the Nawab.

'If you approve of this scheme, which is more feasible than the other I wrote about, he' (Mīr Jafar) 'requests you will write your proposals of what money, what land you want, or what treaties you will engage in.'[7]

[1] Vol. II., p. 334. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 335. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 349, and Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 76. Scrafton ('Reflections,' p. 75) says Yār Lutf Khān made the proposal himself to Mr. Watts. If so, he must have acted with the concurrence of the Seths. [5] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 66.

[6] The 'Seir Mutaqherin' says, Vol. II., p. 227, that Ghasīta Begam gave the remains of her wealth to assist Mīr Jafar in order to revenge herself upon Sirāj-uddaula.

[7] Vol. II., pp. 362, 377. This letter was apparently despatched to Calcutta by Mr. Scrafton.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Clive replied on the 28th.[1] He had some natural doubts of the suitability of Lutf Khān as candidate for the throne, and wished to avoid bloodshed as much as possible. A stronger candidate might, he thought, be found in Mīr Jafar himself. As he did not trust the soldiers already at Cossimbazar, many of them being deserters, Clive proposed, in accordance with Mr. Watts' request for reinforcements,[2] to send up some men from the King's regiment.

This being a critical moment, it was, as usual, seized upon by the civil authorities to harass Colonel Clive. The negotiations with the Nawab had been left to him and the Admiral, and were practically entirely in his hands, he communicating in cipher with Mr. Watts and Mr. Scrafton.[3] These two gentlemen did not agree in all matters, and taking advantage of the consequent friction, the Council proposed to recall Scrafton, whose youth and eagerness suited the Colonel much better than the more cautious diplomacy of Mr. Watts. The Colonel replied very firmly,[4] and they could not refuse his request that Scrafton should stay on at Murshidabad, but they wrote to him that Mr. Watts was the proper person to manage the business, asked that they should be kept informed of everything that was determined, and hinted that Clive might, if he wished, save the expenses incident on his keeping the troops in the field.

Meanwhile the Seths, though they had appeared to accept Omichand's proposal, had been preparing a more feasible plan of their own. Mīr Jafar, as both Watts and Clive had been informed, was really inclined to turn against the Nawab, and they proposed to him that he should take the place Omichand had offered to Yār Lutf Khān. His acquiescence came about in the following manner. It has been said that Mohan Lāl, the Nawab's chief adviser, had been ill, and that on his recovery he seemed to have lost much of his mental powers. He was no longer able to conceal his pride and vanity, and demanded that 'all the grandees and chiefs' should come and salute him. This absurd demand, in which he was

[1] Vol. II., p. 366. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 353, 355.

[3] Apparently Mr. Scrafton was at Murshidabad in connection with the Cossimbazar Factory. His proposal to Clive on the 24th April (Vol. II., p. 357) was to lend Lutf Khān a hundred soldiers who, with his own men, would storm the Nawab's palace.

[4] Vol. II., p. 367.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

supported by the Nawab, broke down Mīr Jafar's much-tried patience,[1] so that he at last consented to listen to the Seths' proposals.

With his letter of the 26th April Mr. Watts sent to Clive copies of letters from Nandkumār and Mathurā Mal[2] to the Nawab warning the Nawab against the British. Nandkumār was tired of waiting for the rewards of his treachery at the time of the siege of Chandernagore. The British had failed to obtain his confirmation as *Faujdār* of Hugli, and, knowing their power, he ascribed this failure to their want of goodwill. Mathurā Mal's letter was to the effect that the British were strengthening Cossimbazar in order to attack the Nawab suddenly in his palace. This, we know, was Scrafton's suggestion, and it had an air of probability, as Mīr Jafar had already armed his men in order to resist any attempt of the Nawab to arrest him. On receipt of the letter Sirāj-uddaula ordered Mīr Jafar to march down to Plassey. Accordingly, to quiet his suspicions Mr. Watts advised that no troops should be sent up to Murshidabad, and that the Nawab should be written to politely, no mention being made of anything but merchandise. 26th April, 1757.

Mr. Watts' letter was presented by Clive to the Select Committee on the 1st May. They immediately decided to accept Mīr Jafar's offers on the following grounds: 1st May, 1757.

1. The Nawab's dishonesty and insolent behaviour showed that he had concluded the Treaty only to gain time.

2. His intrigues with the French—*i.e.*, with Law and Bussy—proved that it was his firm intention to break the peace at a favourable opportunity.

3. The detestation in which the Nawab was held by all classes made it certain a Revolution would take place, and therefore it would be wise to make sure of the friendship of his successor.[3]

Accordingly, Colonel Clive was instructed to transmit to Mr. Watts certain conditions to be offered to Mīr Jafar, which he did the next day.[4] These conditions included all that had been obtained and demanded from Sirāj-uddaula.

Mr. Watts was still under the impression that Omichand was working in the interests of the British, but the change of plan by

[1] Vol. II., p. 410, and Vol. III., p. 211.
[2] Vol. II., pp. 364, 365.
[3] Select Committee Proceedings, 1 May, 1757.
[4] Vol. II., pp. 372, 373.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

which Mīr Jafar, a prince over whom Omichand had no control, was substituted for Yār Lutf Khān, did not suit his wishes, and though possibly he had no intention of opposing a Revolution which he knew must take place, it became necessary for him to get what he could out of the Nawab before everything fell into the power of the Seths' protégé, Mīr Jafar, and he saw his way at the same time to obtain a certain revenge upon both the Seths and the British. Accordingly, when he found Ranjīt Rāi pressing the Nawab for the payment of the *lakh* promised him at the Peace of the 9th February, he represented to Sirāj-uddaula that if the negotiations with the British were conducted through him alone the Nawab might escape paying Ranjīt Rāi anything, either for himself or for the leading men at Calcutta. The Nawab was so pleased with this suggestion that he disgraced Ranjīt Rāi and ordered Omichand to be paid a large sum of money due to him by the State, and to have restored to him all his goods and effects that had been sequestered.[1] This trick upon their Agent was not likely to be forgiven by the Seths, and it was speedily made clear to Mr. Watts that in any treaty with the Seths and Mīr Jafar Omichand must be left out.

6th May, 1757. When Mr. Watts received Clive's reply about the 6th May, Omichand openly expressed his dissatisfaction with the new arrangement. Meanwhile, Mr. Scrafton had gone down to Calcutta and explained matters to Clive, and had apparently urged Omichand's claims to consideration, for on the 5th May Clive wrote to Watts that Omichand's losses in the Troubles ought to be made good by a special article in the Treaty.[2] This letter did not reach Watts until after the Seths had decided to have nothing to do with Omichand, and had caused Watts to be informed of the way in which Omichand had tricked both Ranjīt Rāi and the British.[3] Probably Omichand heard of the Seths' communication to Mr. Watts by some underhand channel, and he now determined to play an even bolder game. He therefore insisted on Mr. Watts demanding for him 5 per cent. on all the Nawab's treasure, and that Mīr Jafar should promise not to exact from the Bengal *Zamīndārs* any more than they had paid in the time of Murshid Kulī Khān, whilst to secure Rāi Durlabh to his own side Omichand agreed that he should receive one quarter of all that he himself could

[1] Vol. II., p. 381. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 380. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 381.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

obtain from Mīr Jafar. Finding Omichand insist on his conditions,[1] Watts was convinced of his treachery, especially as he strongly dissuaded him from pressing the Nawab to pay the 20,000 gold mohurs he had promised to pay the leading Europeans for arranging the Treaty of the 9th February. Accordingly, he went with Coja Petrus to see Omar Beg, an officer already mentioned for his friendship to the British, and now the chief confidant of Mīr Jafar. Mīr Jafar himself, probably at the instigation of the Seths, said that he would have nothing to do with Omichand, and Omar Beg was deputed to Calcutta with proposals somewhat more favourable to the British than those they had themselves suggested. So urgent was the matter that two days later, on the 16th May, Mr. Watts sent to Calcutta a blank paper bearing Mīr Jafar's seal for the Select Committee to write their own terms. 16th May, 1757.

On the 17th May the Select Committee considered the question of Omichand's demands, and decided that his conduct deserved disgrace and punishment rather than a stipulation of any kind in his favour in the treaty with Mīr Jafar.[2] They were still less inclined to grant his new demands. Clive thereupon proposed that as it would be dangerous to refuse Omichand openly he should be deceived by a trick, and that the best way to effect this would be to draw up two treaties, one containing an Article granting him the sum he demanded, and another treaty from which it should be excluded. On the morality of this device Clive expressed himself as follows to the Parliamentary Select Committee: 17th May, 1757.

'When Mr. Watts had nearly accomplished the means of carrying that Revolution into execution, he acquainted him by letter that a fresh difficulty had started; that Omichund had insisted upon 5 *per cent.* on all the Nabob's treasures, and thirty *lack* in money, and threatened if he did not comply with that demand he would immediately acquaint Serajah Dowlah with what was going on, and Mr. Watts should be put to death. That when he received this advice he thought art and policy warrantable in defeating the purposes of such a villain, and that his Lordship himself formed the plan of the fictitious treaty to which the Committee consented. . . . That his Lordship never made any secret of it; he thinks it warrantable in such a case, and would do it again a hundred times. *He had no interested motive in doing it*, and did it with a design of disappointing the expectations of a rapacious man.'[3]

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[1] Mr. Sykes says he threatened to betray the whole matter to the Nawab (Vol. III., p. 307).

[2] Vol. II., p. 383.

[3] Vol. III., p. 315.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The fact that Clive was not ashamed of the action does not make it any better, but we must remember that he had always been ready to give Omichand a fair recompense for his losses by a special article in the Treaty with Mīr Jafar until he attempted to extort more than he deserved by threats of treachery, and now, as Mīr Jafar and Jagat Seth objected to admitting Omichand to the benefits of the conspiracy, it seemed absolutely necessary to devise some plan to deceive Omichand or else to withdraw from the conspiracy, and possibly cause Mr. Watts and the British up-country to lose their lives. With these reasons and the reflection that neither he nor the British received any pecuniary benefit from the deception of Omichand, Clive and the Select Committee quieted their consciences.

Having decided upon this course, Clive seems to have entered into it with almost boyish glee,[1] trying in every way to improve upon his first conception. Accordingly, he wrote to Watts:

'Flatter Omychund greatly, tell him the Admiral, Committee, and self are infinitely obliged to him for the pains he has taken to aggrandize the Company's affairs, and that his name will be greater in England than ever it was in India. If this can be brought to bear, to give him no room for suspicion we take off 10 *lack* from the 30 demanded for himself, and add 5 *per cent.* upon the whole sum received, which will turn out the same thing.'[2]

Clive thought that a too ready acquiescence might excite Omichand's suspicions, but that his mind would be—as it was for a time—entirely set at rest by this pretence of haggling over the terms.

The one difficulty about the scheme was to obtain Admiral Watson's signature to the false Treaty. The Admiral declined to sign it, and also refused to allow his seal to be used,[3] but whether he was cognisant of the fact that his signature would be forged cannot be ascertained. The probability is that in a bluff, sailor-like way he refused to have anything to do with the matter, and told them 'they might do as they pleased.'[4] Clive and the Select Committee put their own interpretation upon this per-

[1] Clive was only thirty-two years of age, having been born at Styche, near Market Drayton, 29th September, 1725.

[2] Vol. II., p. 389.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 387, and Vol. III., p. 318.

[4] Vol. III., p. 318.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

mission, and by Clive's order Mr. Lushington forged the Admiral's signature.[1] The false Treaty—upon red paper[2]—was shown to Omichand, and his suspicions were quieted until the danger was practically past.

As I have said, all that can be offered in defence of Clive and the Select Committee in reference to this transaction is the supposed political necessity of the situation, and the fact that none of them benefited pecuniarily in any way by their action. The only person who did so benefit was Mīr Jafar. When the time came for Omichand to demand his share of the spoils he was quietly told by Mr. Scrafton that he was to have nothing. On the authority of Orme,[3] it is stated that the shock was so great that he was reduced to a state of imbecility, in which he remained till his death in the following year. If M. Raymond, the translator of the 'Seir Mutaqherin,' is correct,[4] so far from having been reduced to a state of imbecility, Omichand joined Mīr Jafar in a crafty and successful scheme to deceive the British as to the amount of treasure left by Sirāj-uddaula in his Treasury. At any rate, Clive thought his presence in Murshidabad inadvisable, and suggested that he should pay a visit to a holy shrine at Malda.[5] Possibly, there he had opportunity to meditate over his words to the Nawab:

'that he had lived under the English protection these forty years, that he never knew them once to break their agreement—to the truth of which Omychund took his oath by touching a Bramin's foot—and that if a lie could be proved in England upon anyone, they were spit upon and never trusted.'[6]

If Omichand had, as many people say, suffered from the injustice of British officials he could not with all his Oriental cunning and malice have devised a more bitter revenge upon the nation to which they belonged, than the stain which his threatened treachery brought upon the name of Clive. Had Clive and the Committee thought more of the national honour than on what was expedient

[1] Vol. II., p. 387, and Vol. III., pp. 318, 320.

[2] Vol. III., p. 318.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 325, note.

[4] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 237, note 125. The bulk of the treasure was taken into the female apartments in the palace, where the British did not think of looking for it. See also Vol. II., p. 438.

[5] Vol. II., p. 465.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

for the time, had they insisted on holding to their word, even when extorted by a villain, it is probable that Mīr Jafar and the Seths would, for their own safety, have accepted any conditions the British chose to lay down, and Mīr Jafar would have been saved all that long discussion with the Committee as to the payment of the donations he had promised, which ultimately led to his own ruin and that of his successor, Mīr Kāsim; but it seems to have been fated that whatever was done, whether right or wrong, by the foes or friends of the British, should all work together for the overthrow of the native Government.

12th-14th May, 1757.

We must now return to the Nawab. The open accusations of the partisans of the French, the rumours which reached him by his spies of what the Europeans were openly talking about in their Factories,[1] had certainly produced some impression upon his mind. The usual good fortune of the British helped them to obviate these suspicions. About the 12th May Clive received a letter from the Marathas offering their assistance to obtain justice from the Nawab. The messenger was a man of no importance, and the Committee supposed that the letter was a forgery devised by Mānik Chand to test the intentions of the British. At the same time the latter wished for nothing less than the interference of the Marathas, and yet feared, if the letter were genuine, to excite their hostility whilst they were still on bad terms with the Nawab. It struck Clive, however, that the letter might be put to advantage, and a reply was drawn up to the effect that at present they were on good terms with the Nawab, but that if he did not fulfil his promises they intended to renew the war after the Rains. A letter of this kind could do no harm, even if it fell into the hands of the Nawab, but it might excite the suspicion of Mīr Jafar as to their loyalty to him. They therefore decided to acquaint him[2] with the whole affair, when a still bolder plan suggested itself to Clive—namely, to send the letter to the Nawab himself.[3] Mr. Scrafton was accordingly ordered to proceed with it to Murshidabad. He arrived on the 23rd, and on the morning of the 24th had an audience with the Nawab, who was, or pretended[4] to be, so delighted with this proof of the loyalty

[1] Vol. III., p. 251.
[2] Vol. II., p. 379.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 388.
[4] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 79.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of the British that he immediately ordered Mīr Jafar to return to Murshidabad.[1] This favourable impression was confirmed by Mr. Watts informing him that the British withdrew their demand to be allowed to refortify Cossimbazar,[2] and on the 30th Mr. Watts ordered Lieutenant Cassells with the military to go down to Calcutta. 30th May, 1757. He had determined to make his escape with his two companions, Messrs. Collet and Sykes, at the proper moment, and had arranged that Omichand should go down with Mr. Scrafton. The latter set out on the 30th, and after experiencing much difficulty in persuading Omichand to start,[3] at last got him away and reached Calcutta, himself on the 2nd June and Omichand a little later. Omichand had played his own game up to the very last. On the 16th May, in spite of Mr. Watts' remonstrances, he went to the Nawab and informed him that he had a great secret to disclose. What it was is not known. He himself told Watts it was a lie which he had concocted to the effect that the British had concluded an alliance with Bussy against the Nawab. Watts[4] suspected that it was the conspiracy between the British and Mīr Jafar. Whatever it may have been the Nawab gave Omichand in return for this information a *parwāna* to the Raja of Burdwan for 4 *lakhs* of rupees which he still owed him, and also for the delivery of the remainder of his goods. On his way down to Calcutta Omichand gave Scrafton the slip and got away to Plassey, where he had a long interview with Rāi Durlabh, which nearly upset the whole of the arrangements. We shall refer to this a little later.

The agreement finally proposed by the Committee to Mīr Jafar was to the following effect:

1. Mīr Jafar to confirm all the grants and privileges allowed by Sirāj-uddaula.

2. Mīr Jafar to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with the British.

3. All Frenchmen in Bengal with their Factories and goods to be delivered up to the British. The French never to be permitted to resettle in the three Provinces.

4. The Company to receive 100 *lakhs* for the loss sustained by the destruction of Calcutta and for the expenses of the war.

[1] Vol. II., p. 393.
[2] Vol. III, p. 209.
[3] Orme, 'History,' vol. ii., pp. 157-159.
[4] Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 91.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

5. The European inhabitants of Calcutta to receive 50 *lakhs* of rupees for their losses at the capture of that town.

6. The Hindus to receive 20 *lakhs* on the same account.

7. The Armenians 7 *lakhs*.

8. Omichand 20 *lakhs*.

9. The Company to be put in possession of all the land within the Calcutta Ditch and 600 yards all round.

10. The Company to receive the *zamīndārī* of the country south of Calcutta between the River and the Salt Lakes as far as Culpee.

11. The Nawab to pay the extraordinary expenses of the British troops when required by him for his own defence.

12. The Government not to erect fortifications on the river below Hugli.

13. The articles to be complied with within thirty days of Mīr Jafar's being acknowledged Nawab.

14. The Company to assist Mīr Jafar against all enemies as long as he complies with the Treaty.[1]

19th May, 1757. This agreement or Treaty had been drawn out and signed by the Committee on the 19th May,[2] and returned to Mr. Watts. Beside the terms stated in the Treaty, Mr. Watts was instructed to ask for 12 *lakhs* as a present to the Select Committee, and 40 *lakhs* for the Army and Navy. It was necessary to conclude the matter, but Mīr Jafar would not give a definite answer until he had consulted Rāi Durlabh, who was the Nawab's Treasurer, and commanded a large part of the army. Rāi Durlabh arrived in Murshidabad on

2nd June, 1757. the 2nd June, and it was quickly evident that Omichand had filled his mind with suspicion. Watts was so disgusted that he wrote to Clive that it would be better to act alone than in

'connection with such a set of shuffling, lying, spiritless wretches.'[3]

However, Rāi Durlabh thought better of the matter,[4] and on the 4th Mr. Watts was informed that he and Mīr Jafar would agree to the terms of the Committee, but Mr. Watts dared not go openly to Mīr Jafar's palace. Late at night Coja Petrus[5] took him in a *dooley* or native sedan chair such as was used only by women and

[1] Vol. II., pp. 383-385. Article 8 was not included in the real Treaty.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 449 [3] *Ibid.*, p. 397.

[4] He certainly made some agreement with Mīr Jafar, either the 5 *per cent.* on the total spoil or to cheat the British as Raymond suggests, or very possibly both.

[5] Vol. III., p. 366.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

was therefore 'inviolable' to see Mīr Jafar, who at once affixed his signature to the Treaty as drafted by the Committee.[1] The document was entrusted to Omar Beg, who hurried down to Calcutta and delivered it to the Select Committee on the 11th June.

Whether it was because of Omichand's lie about Bussy or for some other reason, the Nawab determined to keep his army at Plassey, and to arrest Mīr Jafar. Unfortunately for himself, on receiving the Maratha letter, he had dismissed half his army, and the pay of the men who remained was heavily in arrears.[2] And now, on his attempting to arrest Mīr Jafar, the latter had the Nawab's men well beaten and driven away.[3] Instead of sending a stronger force to take Mīr Jafar, he left him alone, but insulted him still further by giving the post of *Bakhshī* to another officer, Coja Hādī.

Nothing now remained for Mr. Watts to do except to watch an opportunity to escape. This he managed to effect on the evening of the 12th June,[4] having obtained the Nawab's permission to go to Mandipur, the country seat of the Cossimbazar Factory, for a little hunting. When in the open country he and his companions Collet and Sykes dismissed their native grooms, and after an exciting ride reached Agradwip in safety, accompanied only by a Mogul servant. Thence the three dropped down in boats until they met Clive's advanced force on the 14th at Khulna.[5] 12th-14th June, 1757.

The Nawab seems to have been informed almost immediately of their flight. He had been warned of his danger on the 8th by M. Sinfray, whom Law sent down, but the information was too vague, or, what is more probable, he had feared to act upon it. Some of his advisers counselled the destruction of Mīr Jafar, and to wait for Law, to whom he wrote to come down at once to his assistance. But the Nawab had so much reason to distrust his troops that he dared not postpone fighting, or repeat his attempt to arrest Mīr Jafar. He therefore had resort to an expedient tried successfully by his grandfather when his officers were about to desert him in the middle of a battle against the Marathas. He went to see Mīr Jafar, begged him to agree to a reconciliation, and accepted his promise to be true to him.[6]

[1] Vol. II., p. 383. [2] Vol. III., p. 239. [3] Vol. II., p. 411.
[4] Watts' 'Memoir' (p. 99) says the 11th June.
[5] Vol. III., p. 51. [6] Vol. II., p. 416.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Having taken this precaution, Sirāj-uddaula, with well-simulated indignation, wrote to Clive and Watson,[1] reproaching them with having broken the Treaty, and marched slowly to join his army of 50,000 men at Plassey. Law, of course, had not been able to join the Nawab, but the latter took down with him a small party of thirty or forty Europeans under M. Sinfray to manage his artillery. Before M. Sinfray left Cossimbazar, he obtained permission to destroy the British Factory.[2]

At Plassey the Nawab found his army in an entrenched camp on the eastern or left bank of the Cossimbazar River. According to Eyre Coote it consisted of 20,000 horse and 40,000 foot, with a large number of elephants and guns.[3]

[1] Vol. II., pp. 409, 411. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 461. [3] Vol. III., p. 56.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER XV.

PLASSEY.

'This famous battle which put Bengal and its dependencies, so to say, in the power of the English.'—LAW.[1]

IT will never be known whether Omichand betrayed the conspiracy to Sirāj-uddaula, or whether he or someone else disclosed it in Calcutta; but it was publicly spoken of in that town on the 5th June,[2] and it was known in Murshidabad on the 7th, probably by means of Mathurā Mal[3] the spy, which may account for the Nawab receiving M. Sinfray the next day.[4] Clive was very anxious about the safety of Mr. Watts and his companions, and it became necessary for him to move. He was then in camp at the French Gardens. On the 12th Major Killpatrick joined him at Chandernagore with all the military from Calcutta. Admiral Watson sent a garrison of 100 sailors to Chandernagore, and ordered the *Bridgewater* to anchor off the town of Hugli to overawe the *Faujdār*.[5] The latter was an officer named Shaikh Amīr-ulla, whom the Nawab had appointed in spite of the British recommendation of Nandkumār. Amīr-ulla, after a feeble protest, resigned himself to obey Clive's orders and made no attempt to interfere with his march.[6] 5th-7th June, 1757.

On the 13th Clive wrote to the Nawab recapitulating the grievances of the British, referring particularly to his treacherous correspondence with Law and Bussy, and announcing his intention of marching to Murshidabad, there to submit his complaints to the arbitration of Jagat Seth, Mohan Lāl, Mīr Jafar, Rāi Durlabh, Mīr Madan, and the other chief nobles and officers.[7] 13th June, 1757.

[1] Vol. III., p. 212. [2] Vol. II., pp. 398, 418. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 400, 403.
[4] Vol. III., p. 210. [5] Vol. II., p. 403.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 404, 405. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 407.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

13th-17th June, 1757. The same day Clive began his march with a force of 650 military, 100 topasses, 150 of the train (including 50 sailors commanded by Lieutenant Hayter and 7 midshipmen), 8 pieces of cannon (6-pounders), and 2,100 sepoys. The sepoys marched by land, the rest of the force went by water. The same evening they reached Nyaserai. On the 14th they arrived towards nightfall at Khulna, a *jamadār*, *havildār*, and 29 Madras sepoys having deserted on the march. Messrs. Watts, Collet, and Sykes joined them in the afternoon. On the 15th Colonel Clive appointed Captain Archibald Grant a Major, and on the 16th gave the same rank to Captain Eyre Coote. On the 17th the army reached Patli, and Major Coote was detached with 200 Europeans, 500 sepoys, and 2 field-pieces to attack Cutwa Fort, the Commandant of which had promised to come over to the British.

18th-19th June, 1757. Major Coote arrived at Cutwa on the 18th, and encamped opposite the Fort. On the 19th the officer in charge of the artillery informed him he could not bring the guns up the river owing to the shallowness of the water, so Coote sent a *jamadār* with a flag of truce to say he had come as a friend, but if the Commandant, whose soldiers had already fired on his men, continued to resist, he would storm the place and give no quarter. The Commandant refused to surrender, so the sepoys made a pretence of attacking the Fort in front whilst the Europeans crossed the river which lies between the Fort and town a little higher up. As soon as the British advanced the enemy deserted the Fort. This was an earthen fortification with eight round towers, and about half a mile in circumference, and was armed with fourteen guns.[1] Its importance lay in the fact that it commanded the highroad to Murshidabad, thus securing access or retreat by water, and it also contained a very large quantity of grain.[2]

Clive's main army arrived at Cutwa late at night, and halted the next day, much distressed by the heavy rains, which prevented the men from using their tents.

Up to this time Clive had received nothing but bare promises from Mīr Jafar. He had no personal acquaintance with that Prince, and hesitated to risk the fortunes of the Company on the bare word of a man who, whatever his reasons, was a traitor to his own

[1] Vol. III., p. 53. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Sovereign. Accordingly, he wrote to the Committee that he would not cross the river unless Mīr Jafar joined him, and that if he could only secure 10,000 *maunds* of grain he could, with this and what he had secured at Cutwa, hold his present position until after the Rains, when, if the Nawab did not consent to a firm peace, it would be easy to form an alliance with the Marathas, or the Raja of Birbhum, or even the *Wazīr* of Delhi.[1] Clive's letter was discussed by the Committee on the 23rd June, and the members present (Messrs. Drake and Becher) boldly declared the Colonel's fears to be groundless, and that he should be instructed to force on an engagement,

'provided he thinks there is a good prospect of success.'[2]

This diplomatically-worded order did not reach Clive until the 27th, when, his victory being complete, he replied with dignified contempt that its contents were

'so indefinite and contradictory that I can put no other construction on it than an intent to clear yourselves at my expense, had the expedition miscarried.'[3]

Meantime he had with much misgiving called a Council of War on the 21st. 21st June, 1757.

'The Colonel informed the Council that he found he could not depend on Meer Jaffier for anything more than his standing neuter in case we came to an action with the Nabob, that Monsieur Law with a body of French was then within three days' march of joining the Nabob (whose army, by the best intelligence he could get, consisted of about 50,000 men), and that he called us together to desire our opinions whether in these circumstances it would be prudent to come to immediate action with the Nabob, or fortify ourselves where we were, and remain till the *Monsoon*[4] was over, and the Morattoes could be brought into the country.'[5]

With that touch of comedy which runs through all the tragic events of the reign of Sirāj-uddaula, the Council of War had been opened by a demand from Lieutenant Hayter to take precedence of the Company's Captains. On his request being disallowed he refused to vote, and withdrew from the Council.[6] Clive gave his vote

[1] Vol. II., p. 418. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 423.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 431. Another trick played by the Committee was to allow Mr. Drake to reply personally to letters addressed to the Committee collectively, with, of course, the same object—viz., to place the blame of failure on Clive's shoulders (Vol. II., p. 429).

[4] The Rains. [5] Vol. III., p. 54. [6] *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 362.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

against immediate action, and of the remaining members of the Council, twelve voted against and seven for it.[1] Major Coote, the first of the minority to vote, thought it necessary to give his reasons, which were—

1. That the men were in the best of spirits, and any delay would discourage them.

2. That the arrival of M. Law would strengthen the Nawab's army and councils, and would probably be followed by the desertion of the numerous Frenchmen in the British force.

3. That the army was so far from Calcutta that communications could be maintained only with difficulty, if at all.

He therefore voted for immediate action or a retreat to Calcutta. With him in the minority were all the Bengal officers except Captains Fischer and Lebeaume. The former appears to have been quite new to the country, and the latter had only just been restored to his rank after a somewhat arbitrary dismissal by Clive.[2] He might well hesitate to vote against the opinion of that determined commander.[3] As a matter of fact, we may say that all the officers who knew the country were in favour of immediate action. Clive asserted later on that

'this was the only Council of War he ever held, and if he had abided by that Council it would have been the ruin of the East India Company.'[4]

Clive explained in his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee that he had never consulted any of his notes since the battle, and this explains why he spoke as he did; for the question put before the Council of War was not whether they should fight or not, but whether they should advance before they obtained assurances of assistance from Mīr Jafar. An hour after the Council Clive informed Major Coote that he would march next day.[5] On the 22nd, early in the morning, the army set out, and reached Plassey Grove about twelve at night, where word was brought that the Nawab's vanguard of 6,000 men was within three miles of the British. The same day Clive received a letter from Mīr Jafar, promising his assistance and explaining his plans.[6]

22nd June, 1757.

[1] Vol. III., pp. 53, 321. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 344.

[3] Captain Lebeaume resigned the Company's service in 1758 (Public Consultations, 21st June, 1758, letter appended).

[4] Vol. III., p. 316. [5] *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 322. [6] Vol. II., p. 420.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The 23rd[1] of June was the anniversary of the King's accession to the throne, and while the ships at Calcutta were firing salutes in the King's honour,[2] Clive and his men were fighting a battle, the ultimate result of which was to add to his dominions the greatest dependency ever held by a European Power. 23rd June, 1757.

This famous fight has been so often described[3] that it is impossible to add anything not already known, and the changes in the features of the country have rendered the battlefield so unlike what it was in 1757 that it is no longer possible to identify the points mentioned in the various accounts which have been left of it. The British, who held the celebrated grove, then known as the Laksha Bāgh, or grove of one hundred thousand trees,[4] were protected from the fire of the Nawab's heavy guns by a high embankment which ran round it. It was due to this cause and the distrust which the Nawab and his army felt towards each other that the British suffered so little loss.[5]

According to a Dutch account, the Nawab's vanguard consisted of about 15,000 men, commanded by Mohan Lāl, Mīr Madan, Mānik Chand, Coja Hādī, and Naba Singh Hazārī.[6] Jafar Alī Khān, Rāi Durlabh, and Yār Lutf Khān commanded separate detachments, and took no part in the fight.

Soon after daybreak[7] the Nawab's vanguard advanced to the attack. The British were in four divisions under Majors Killpatrick, Grant, and Coote, and Captain Gaupp. They were stationed in front of the embankment, with the guns and sepoys on the flanks. Mīr Madan, with a body of native troops and the French, quickly occupied an eminence[8] within two hundred yards

[1] The 'Dictionary of National Biography' gives the date as the 12th June, which corresponds to the 23rd June, N.S.

[2] Vol. III., p. 17.

[3] It will be seen that the various accounts to be found in this Selection differ greatly in detail, especially as to the time at which the eminences in front of the British position were captured—*e.g.*, compare Clive's own accounts (Vol. II., pp. 427, 440). In general, I have followed the account given by Eyre Coote (Vol. III., p. 55).

[4] See Bholanath Chunder's 'Travels of a Hindu,' p. 51.

[5] Vol. III., pp. 212, 324. [6] Vol. II., p. 426. [7] Vol. III., p. 55.

[8] Some of the descriptions mention 'eminences' and some 'tanks.' In the plains of Bengal tanks are artificial ponds, generally quadrangular in shape, and vary much

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of the British, and their fire and that of the other advanced posts rendered it advisable for the latter to withdraw into the Grove. The enemy were apparently afraid to assault this position, and a cannonade on both sides followed until about two o'clock. Clive had for the moment retired to Plassey House, a small hunting lodge, to change his clothes, which were wet through by a sudden shower of rain, when suddenly the enemy, dismayed[1] by the loss of Mīr Madan and Bahādur Alī Khān, son-in-law to Mohan Lāl, began to retreat upon their entrenchments. Clive's intention had been to wait until night to make an attack on the latter,[2] but Major Killpatrick, thinking the moment favourable, sent word to Clive and marched out of the Grove. In a few minutes Clive was on the spot, and angrily reprimanded Major Killpatrick,[3] whom he at first sent back to the Grove, but on his apologizing for his breach of orders, he permitted him to remain. It was now impossible to retire, so Clive continued the advance, and the enemy were quickly driven from the eminence near the British Camp. Here a halt seems to have been made till about 4 p.m., when the Grenadiers and a company of sepoys advanced towards another Tank and eminence close to the Nawab's entrenchments. By this time the Nawab's army was entirely demoralised. No one knew who was faithful to the Nawab and who a traitor, but it was evident to every man present that Mīr Jafar and Rāi Durlabh, who had marched round to the right of Plassey Grove but had not fired a shot, had no intention of assisting their compatriots. However, the detachment at the Tank, and the men in the entrenchments, kept up a warm but ineffectual fire. Clive, finding that the enemy would not come out of their defences, ordered his men to storm these two positions, and apparently about the same time the Nawab sent word to Sinfray and the French[4] to retire as he was betrayed and the battle lost. Sirāj-uddaula fled on a camel[5]

in size. The earth excavated in making the tank is thrown up generally as an embankment round the tank, but sometimes in a single mound or hill. Thus 'tank' and 'eminence' may well refer to what is practically the same position.

[1] Vol. II., p. 427. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 440. [3] Vol. III., p. 404.

[4] The 'Seir Mutaqherin' says Mohan Lāl wished to continue the fight (Vol. II., p. 233).

[5] Vol. II., p. 441.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

belonging to one of his servants, and was one of the first who entered Murshidabad to announce his defeat.[1]

The British had little difficulty in dispersing his followers, whom they pursued as far as Daudpur, about six miles from the field, where they halted for the night. The Nawab's army had lost about 500 men killed, three elephants, and a great number of horses, and the British took fifty-three guns. Amongst the plunder of the Camp was the Nawab's tent. On his inkstand was found a list of thirteen of his courtiers whom he had doomed to death.[2]

During the battle Mīr Jafar and Rāi Durlabh had not fired a shot or struck a blow. They marched their forces round to the right of Plassey Grove, but as they sent no message to Clive, he did not recognise them, and supposing that they were a party of the enemy trying to outflank him, opened fire to keep them at a safe distance.[3] On the 24th Mīr Jafar, with Omar Beg, whom Clive had sent to him, appeared in Clive's camp. Whether his real intention had been to join in the attack on the British in the event of Mīr Madan being victorious, or to assist Clive, he had done nothing for either party, and Mīr Jafar had grave doubts as to the reception he would be granted. When the guard turned out 24th June, 1757.

'to receive him as he passed, he started as if he thought it was all over with him; nor did his countenance brighten up till the Colonel embraced him, and saluted him *Subah* of the three provinces.'[4]

Mīr Jafar informed Clive that he was determined to carry out the terms of the Treaty concluded between him and the Council, and hastened to Murshidabad to ensure the capture of Sirāj-uddaula and prevent any commotion amongst the people or soldiery. On reaching Murshidabad, Mīr Jafar took possession of the Nawab's palace of Mansurganj,[5] giving up his own palace of Jafarganj to his son Mīrān. Clive arrived on the 26th and encamped at the French Factory at Saidabad. He was about to enter the town on the 27th when the Seths warned Mr. Watts that Mīrān, Rāi Durlabh, and others had formed a plot to kill him 26th-28th June, 1757.

[1] Vol. III., p. 212, and Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 89.
[2] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 95.
[3] Vol. II., p. 441.
[4] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 90, and Vol. III., p. 324.
[5] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 237.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

on his way to the palace.[1] This would have been an easy matter, for as Clive tells us,

'The city of Muxadavad[2] is as extensive, populous, and rich as the City of London.'[3]

And

'The inhabitants . . . must have amounted to some hundred thousands, and if they had had an inclination to have destroyed the Europeans, they might have done it with sticks and stones.'[4]

Accordingly, Clive postponed his visit until the next day, when he made his entry with a guard of 100 King's troops, the Company's Grenadiers, 500 sepoys, and two field-pieces, the whole army being held in readiness to march at a moment's warning.[5] He took up his abode at the Murad Bagh,[6] and the same afternoon Mīrān came to conduct him to his father, who was now in the Nawab's other palace of Hira Jhil.[7]

'As I found he declined taking his seat on the *musnud*, I handed him to it and saluted him as Nabob, upon which his courtiers congratulated him, and paid him the usual homage.'[8]

Thus the Revolution was carried to a successful conclusion by the diplomacy of Mr. Watts and the courage and conduct of Clive.

The victory of Plassey has always been considered one of the decisive battles of history, and yet the victors lost only 4 Europeans and 14 sepoys killed, and 11 Europeans and 36 sepoys wounded; 4 European[9] and 2 sepoy officers were wounded, and 1 sepoy officer killed.

Law belittles the victory as a military achievement, for he says:

'Their memoirs show that, without the intervention of a miracle, it could only end to their advantage, since the greater part of the Nawab's army was against him. . . . Fear pervaded the whole army before the action commenced. Everyone was persuaded that Siraj-uddaula was betrayed, and no one knew whom to trust.'[10]

There is no doubt that, as regards actual fighting and the part

[1] Vol. II., p. 431. [2] Murshidabad. [3] Vol. III., p. 314.
[4] Vol. III., p. 324. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[6] Orme, 'History,' vol. ii., p. 181.
[7] This was the palace of Sirāj-uddaula (see Orme, 'History,' vol. ii., p. 159).
[8] Vol. II., p. 437.
[9] Lieutenants Cassels and Holst, Sergeants Delubar and Lyons.
[10] Vol. III., p. 212.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

played by the soldier, Plassey was, as a battle, not even to be compared with the skirmishes round Calcutta in the preceding February, but this does not detract from the example of moral courage exhibited by Clive. Behind him was the Bengal Council and Select Committee, composed of a body of men jealous, mean and cowardly; before him an army enormously superior in number. His only hope lay in the courage and discipline of his troops, the greater part of whom were foreigners, including many deserters, and in the word of a man whom he had never seen, whose action up to the very moment of battle had given little or no reason for confidence, and who, as I have said, was, whatever his justification, a traitor to one who was his relative as well as sovereign.

The effect of the victory upon Clive's position amongst the officials at Calcutta was great and instantaneous. Drake, who had assisted in all the petty mortifications inflicted upon him by the Council and Committee, and whose letters, while matters were still in suspense, had bordered upon insolence,[1] now wrote:

'I depend upon you for this, and for further friendly acts you have greatly in your power to confer on him who is with great truth and regard, etc.—ROGER DRAKE.'[2]

And the Admiral, who had even doubted his chances of success in this expedition,[3] joined with Admiral Pocock and the Council in a letter of congratulation.[4]

'The revolution effected by your gallant conduct, and the bravery of the officers and soldiers under you is of extraordinary importance not only to the Company, but to the British nation in general; that we think it incumbent to return you and your officers our sincere thanks on behalf of His Britannick Majesty and the East India Company for your behaviour on this critical and important occasion.'[5]

Clive wrote to his friend Orme:

'I am possessed of volumes of materials for the continuance of your History, in which will appear fighting, tricks, chicanery, intrigues, politics and the Lord knows what. In short there will be a fine field for you to display your genius in, so I shall certainly call upon the Coast on my way to England.'[6]

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[1] Vol. II., pp. 392, 418. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 433. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 395.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 432. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 432. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 464.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DEATH OF SIRAJ-UDDAULA.

'A man of Siraj-uddaula's character could nowhere find a real friend.'—LAW.[1]

THE Nawab, as we have seen, was unable to wait for M. Law, whose advice, it must be granted, would probably have been of the greatest service to him, when we consider that the fear of his arrival was one of the chief inducements mentioned by Eyre Coote for immediate action. Sinfray was probably a young man; he was little known to the Nawab and the courtiers, and, therefore, without influence, though evidently a man of great determination and courage. His behaviour at Plassey was honourable to himself and his nation, but useless to the Nawab, for the latter was surrounded by traitors.

23rd June, 1757. When the Nawab rose on the fatal morning of the 23rd June, his natural confusion of mind was increased by the ominous events of the previous evening. Scrafton tells us that as he sat alone in his tent at Plassey his attendants crept away one by one till the place was deserted, and a plunderer entering stole the gold top of the *hukkah* he had just been smoking, and cut off some of the broadcloth of the tent. Suddenly rousing himself, he observed what had happened.

'It shocked his soul to think that he whose frowns were death but in the morning should now be so little feared. He called for his attendants, and cried with great emotion, "Sure, they see me dead."'[2]

Upon the natives of India omens have an influence hardly comprehensible by Europeans, and Sirāj-uddaula must have begun the

[1] Vol. III., p. 213.

[2] 'Reflections,' p. 86.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

day with a presentiment of disaster. Until Mīr Madan fell there was no sign of this being fulfilled, but when that happened he felt that it was necessary to make a supreme appeal to Mīr Jafar. Sending for him, he took off his turban and placed it in his hands, entreating him to defend it.

'I now repent of what I have done, and, availing myself of those ties of consanguinity which subsist between us as well as of those rights which my grandfather, Aliverdi Khan, has doubtless acquired upon your gratitude, I look up to you as the only representative of that venerable personage, and hope, therefore, that, forgetting my past trespasses, you shall henceforth behave as becomes a *Seyd*,[1] a man united in blood to me, and a man of sentiments, who conserves a grateful remembrance of all the benefits he has received from my family. I recommend myself to you; take care of the conservation of my honour and life.'[2]

Though it came too late, this appeal moved Mīr Jafar to some feeling of compassion and regret, and he swore on the Koran to be faithful to him. But events were hurrying him on, and Mīr Jafar, bound by his pledges to his fellow nobles and to the British, could only refrain from actually fighting against him.[3] This is the most probable explanation of his apparent vacillation in the battle itself.

Seeing that Mīr Jafar and Rāi Durlabh remained neutral, the Nawab ordered the French to retire and fled himself. When he arrived at Murshidabad, most of the chiefs who had followed him left him and repaired to their own houses. Next day he threw open the Treasury, and people crowded to it, not to enter into his service, but to carry off what they could.[4] The city was full of his nobles, but from none of them could he hope for assistance, and the only advice he could get was, though wise, unpalatable. It was to surrender to Clive.[5] Dismissing his few remaining counsellors, he found himself left almost alone, and when late at night he received news of Mīr Jafar's arrival in the city, he put his wife, Lutf-unnisā Begam, and a number of his favourite women into coaches with all the gold and jewels he could collect, and fled from

24th June, 1757.

[1] A descendant of the Prophet.
[2] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 232.
[3] Vol. II., p. 423, and Vol. III., p. 324.
[4] Vol. III., p. 324, and 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 234.
[5] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 90.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the city; but instead of taking the left-hand road, which led direct to Rajmahal, probably because he thought the pursuit would certainly go that way, he took the road to the right leading to Bhagwangola,[1] where he embarked with his helpless companions on a number of boats and proceeded up the river. By this flight he cut himself off from those remnants of his army which were still undecided what course to pursue.[2] On the 30th June he arrived close to Rajmahal, and being fatigued with confinement in the boats, went ashore whilst his attendants prepared a meal. Though he had disguised himself in mean clothing, he was recognised by a man named Dānā Shāh. This person had some time before offended Sirāj-uddaula, who had ordered his ears and nose to be cut off. Thus mutilated and disgraced, he was living as a fakir at the very spot where Sirāj-uddaula's evil genius led him to land. Escaping quietly from the spot, Dānā Shāh gave information to Mīr Dāud,[3] who promptly sent a guard to seize and conduct him to Murshidabad. Other officers laid hands on what property they could, and Mīr Kāsim, son-in-law and later on supplanter of Mīr Jafar, took Lutf-unnisā and her casket of jewels, supposed to be worth many *lakhs* of rupees.[4] This apparently happened on the 1st July, and a few hours after Sirāj-uddaula's departure the advance guard of Law's detachment reached Rajmahal.[5] Law had arrived at Patna on the 3rd June. He had a strong presentiment that evil would soon befall the Nawab, but thought he was near enough to join him in time if any emergency arose. He needed only four or five days to go by water to Suti and then two days to march by land to Murshidabad. Even at Patna he heard disquieting rumours, but as late as the 19th he received a letter dated the 10th from the Nawab bidding him not to be uneasy. Probably this was a forgery substituted for a letter written after the Nawab's interview with Sinfray on the 8th, and summoning him to his assistance. All these letters had to pass through the hands of Mīr Dāud at Rajmahal, who forwarded or delayed them as he pleased. Soon after, the rumours of trouble

30th June, 1757.

1st July, 1757.

3rd-30th June, 1757.

[1] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 235. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Stewart (p. 531) says the name of the Governor of Rajmahal was Mīr Kāsim, but the 'Seir Mutaqherin' and Broome say Mīr Dāud.

[4] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 240. [5] Vol. II., p. 443.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

becoming more frequent, Law thought it better to start for Murshidabad, and on the 22nd he received the Nawab's first letter written after the flight of Messrs. Watts, Collet, and Sykes. The same day he wrote and begged the Nawab to wait for him, but Sirāj-uddaula probably never got the letter, for Law himself, hurrying as fast as he could, was delayed by wind and storm. Hence his late arrival at Rajmahal. Hearing that all was over, and knowing the British would promptly send a force in pursuit, he retreated as rapidly as he could, consoling himself with the reflection that, though to have rescued Sirāj-uddaula would have been a feat to boast of, yet now that he was deserted by all his friends the Prince would probably have been more a burden than a help to the French.[1]

When he found himself in the hands of his enemies, Sirāj-uddaula seems to have lost his self-control. He bewailed his fate, begged his guards to spare his life, and offered to retire as a private person on a small pension to any remote corner where the conquerors might send him. Some of the officers seemed to feel pity for him, and so on the 2nd, when he was brought to Murshidabad, Mīr Jafar immediately held a Council to decide upon his fate. Mīr Jafar, it is said, wished to spare his life, but his advisers pointed out that the Colonel was known to be merciful, and that popular opinion might turn in Sirāj-uddaula's favour. Nothing was finally decided, and Mīr Jafar, handing him over to his son Mīrān with strict injunctions to take care of him, retired to sleep.[2] Mīrān mockingly explained to his friends that the best way of guarding the prisoner was to put him to death, and though many of the courtiers, like men of honour, refused the hateful task, one Muhammad Beg[3] accepted it. Taking some armed men with

2nd July, 1757.

[1] Vol. III., pp. 209-213.

[2] 'It has been surmised and very probably not altogether without grounds that there was something of collusion in this matter between the father and the son; a thing indeed not at all unfrequent in this part of the world: and what made it pass for a kind of justice was the remembrance that people had that this unhappy young man, Suraja Dowlat, had been often employed in the very same acts by the old *Suba*, Aliverdy Cawn, who, availing himself of the sanguinary disposition of his grandson, made use of him to remove such as through avarice, suspicion, or resentment, he inclined to have taken away, and then, to save appearances, disavowed the fact' (Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 108).

[3] 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 242.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

him, he hurried to the chamber where the Nawab was confined, and there, without giving him time to perform his ablutions or even utter the prayer which his religion demanded from him at the moment of death, the murderers stabbed him until he fell, crying out that the death of Hasan Kulī Khān, his first victim, was avenged.[1] The British knew nothing of the circumstances of this event until many months after,[2] except that Mīrān had put him to death as his presence in Murshidabad had already excited some commotion amongst the military. The next morning the mutilated body was carried on an elephant through the streets of the town, so that all might know Sirāj-uddaula was dead, and afterwards buried in the Khush Bāgh near the grave of his grandfather.[3]

3rd July, 1757.

Thus perished a Prince, the son and grandson of brave and able men, brought to ruin by an evil education and the overfondness of his grandfather, which led him into excesses that disordered his intellect. He was only twenty-six[4] years of age, and, according to native writers, remarkable for the beauty of his person.[5] Hated and despised by his subjects and foreigners alike, he left one faithful mourner in his wife, Lutf-unnisā, who for many years employed *mullahs*[6] to say prayers at his tomb, which she used frequently to visit.[7]

[1] 'Seer Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 242. [2] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 94.

[3] Vol. II., p. 444.

[4] Stewart (p. 531) says he was only twenty. Watts' 'Memoir' (p. 108) has 'being at the hour of his death scarce twenty-five years of age.'

[5] Law (Vol. III., p. 162) describes him as very common in appearance, but see Stewart (p. 531); and in the 'Seir Mutaqherin' (vol. ii., p. 242) there is mention of 'that beauteous face of his, so renowned all over Bengal for its beauty and sweetness.'

[6] Muhammadan priests.

[7] Forster, 'Journey from Bengal to England, 1781,' vol. i., p. 12.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

MUHAMMADAN WOMEN MOURNING.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

'The Nabob's generosity.'—CLIVE.[1]

BESIDES the immense sums allotted in the Treaty as compensation for the losses suffered by the Company and private persons on the capture of Calcutta, Mīr Jafar had promised to make a donation to the army and navy in return for their assistance. It was the universal opinion that Sirāj-uddaula possessed treasure amounting in value to forty million pounds sterling,[2] and so when Mr. Becher suggested that the Members of the Select Committee,

'who really set the whole machine in motion,'[3]

should be likewise considered, the Select Committee thought they might well ask for some small share of this treasure. The Select Committee consisted of Mr. Drake, Colonel Clive, Mr. Watts, Major Killpatrick, and Mr. Becher. The matter was suggested to Mr. Watts, to whom Clive wrote:

'The Committee, having taken the oath of secrecy' (*i.e.*, regarding the treaty with Mir Jafar) 'upon the Bible, have agreed that Meer Jaffier's private engagements be obtained in writing to make them (the Committee, in which you are included) a present of 12 *lacks* of rupees, and a present of 40 *lacks* to the army and navy over and above what is stipulated in the agreement.'[4]

Nor was it with the British alone that Mīr Jafar had to share his booty. His fellow conspirator, Rāi Durlabh, demanded five *per cent.* of the Nawab's treasures, whilst the Seths had to be recouped the seven *lakhs* of rupees which the French owed them.[5] As regards the last, Clive wished to hand over the French Factories to the Seths, but to this the Council objected.

[1] Vol. III., p. 314 note. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 306, and Scrafton, p. 91.
[3] Vol. III., p. 304. [4] Vol. II., p. 388. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 438.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

When Clive arrived at Murshidabad, Messrs. Watts and Walsh were sent to the city to act as agents for the British in securing the Nawab's treasure. They were met by Rāi Durlabh,[1] who assured them the Treasury contained only one hundred and forty *lacks*, instead of the five thousand which popular rumour ascribed to Sirāj-uddaula, and it was intimated to Clive that as the pay of the army was much in arrears, and as these must be discharged immediately in order to ensure Mīr Jafar's safety, it was impossible for the latter to pay at once all that he had promised to the British. I have already mentioned that according to M. Raymond, Omichand and Rāi Durlabh had plotted to deceive the British by hiding a great portion of the treasure in the women's apartments. Whether this is true or not, Clive found only the comparatively small amount above stated, and after having discussed the matter with Jagat Seth, took Mīr Jafar to visit him at his house, where it was settled that half the promised sum[2] should be paid at once—two-thirds in money and one-third in plate and jewels—and that the other half should be paid in three equal yearly instalments.[3]

The money and goods were immediately handed over, and sent down the river in boats escorted by a detachment of troops.

'As soon as they entered the great river[4] they were joined by the boats of the squadron, and all together formed a fleet of three hundred boats, with music playing, drums beating, and colours flying, and exhibited to the French and Dutch, by whose settlements they passed, a scene far different from what they had beheld the year before, when the Nabob's fleet and army passed them, with the captive English, and all the wealth and plunder of Calcutta.'[5]

Clive calculated that $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling were paid in compensation to those who had been ruined by the loss of Calcutta, to private persons and to the Company, the latter also receiving large grants of land.[6] In one of his letters he wrote that every subaltern would be £3,000 the richer for the Revolution.[7] Thus, by the generosity of Mīr Jafar, the sufferings of the British in Bengal seemed to have been swept away like an evil dream, and for the moment all was triumph and satisfaction; but when the news arrived in England people began to enquire into the pro-

[1] Vol. II., p. 430.
[2] *I.e.*, 100 *lakhs*.
[3] Vol. II., p. 438.
[4] The Hugli.
[5] Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 93.
[6] Orme MSS., O.V., 19, pp. 221, 222.
[7] Vol. III., p. 362.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

portion between the reward given by Mīr Jafar and the services he had received from Clive and the servants of the Company, and it is not impossible that the Court of Directors felt and expressed some jealousy towards their servants, who, so far from their control, could amass such great fortunes as those of which they now saw them in possession. It was not, therefore, unnatural for people to ask whether the action of the Select Committee of Bengal had been altogether honest and disinterested, and whether the hope of what they might themselves obtain from the overthrow of Sirajuddaula had not to some extent influenced their attitude as representatives of the East India Company towards that Prince. The right of the Company to complain was doubtful, for not only did it pay its servants extremely small salaries on the understanding that their position gave them the opportunity of making fortunes by trade, but at that time, near as it is to the present, it was not held to be unusual or in any way disgraceful for gentlemen to take pecuniary rewards for their services from persons of high rank and station. In his evidence before the Select Committee[1] Clive explained his views regarding such rewards, and it is clear that neither he nor his hearers had any idea that he had behaved improperly. This being so, it becomes very difficult for a modern writer to blame Clive and the Bengal Committee, but it is allowable to consider what has been the result of their conduct, and to use our conclusions as a guide for our own action in the future. What the natives of the country saw was that Bengal, which for five hundred years had been the prey of foreigners, had now been transferred to the Europeans, who a few months before had been mere merchants occupying a somewhat humble position in their country, but were now in the possession of great wealth, and in a position to dictate their wishes to the Princes of the land. They found that new arrivals from Britain came out filled with the idea that in Bengal gold might be had for the asking, and every year they saw Europeans carrying off great fortunes to their native country. They asked themselves whether their new masters were not as rapacious as those whom they replaced, and what they themselves had benefited by the change was not so clear to their minds. Thus every day, as the remembrance of the evils of the

[1] Vol. III., pp. 313, 314.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

government of the Nawabs grew fainter, the people looked with greater and greater dislike upon their new rulers. It took many years to remove this taint from the administration, and it is open to doubt whether even now the natives of Bengal are able to appreciate at anything like their full value either the benefit they received by the liberation of the country from the tyranny of Siraj-uddaula, or the disinterestedness of so much of the work done since then by the servants first of the East India Company and afterwards of the British Crown. Finally, one is forced to the conclusion that the first cause of this unhappy miscomprehension lay in the inadequate salaries given by the Court of Directors to their servants both military and civil, which made it difficult for the latter to distinguish between public duties and private desires, and also that a great nation does not properly safeguard its honour when it places its dealings with foreigners in the hands of men who are the servants of a trading Company.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

A SELECTION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PAPERS DEALING WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THE BRITISH IN BENGAL DURING THE REIGN OF SIRAJ-UDDAULA.

1. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to the Council at Masulipatam, dated 26 April, 1756.*[1]

The Nawab Aliverdi Khan died on the 10th current at Secarandoulab. His nephew, who is also his grandson, has succeeded to the *subahdari*[2] of Bengal without the slightest opposition, contrary to our expectations. Instead of the revolution with which we thought the country was menaced at the death of the old Nawab, everything appears to be quiet and to submit to his successor.

2. *Letter from Messrs. Watts, Collet and Batson to the Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 25 May, 1756.*

Yesterday Golaum Hossein Cawn sent for our *vaqueel*[3] and shewed him a letter which his son Golaum Alli Cawn, the Nabob's *arisbeggy*[4] wrote him from his camp, the purport of which was as follows:—that the Nabob receiving a letter from the Governour and at the same time one from the French Director was extreamly angry and immediately sent orders to Roy Doolob to stop our business at Cossimbuzar and to Mohunlol to write to the Nabob at Dacca to stop our business there, and has likewise ordered Cossim Alli Cawn with a body of forces to march to Tannahs Fort and has advanced them two months pay. Since writing the above we have received a message from Kunichowdry,[5] Huckembeg's *duan*,[6] ac-

[1] Pondicherry Records.
[2] Viceroyalty or government.
[3] Native agent.
[4] Officer in charge of petitions.
[5] Haris Chaudhuri.
[6] Minister or manager.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

quainting us that 400 horse are arrived upon the Factory. As we have a very weak garrison at present we request your Honour &c. will send us a party with a supply of ammunition. We are &c. &c.

3. *Ditto, ditto,* 31 *May,* 1756.(1)

Since our last Golaum Shaw a considerable *jummadar*,[1] with his forces are come upon the Factory and put a stop to all provisions coming in.

We are informed by our *vacqueel* who had it from Golaum Shaw, that unless your Honour &c. will fill up the ditch and pull down the new works which he hears is begun upon, he is determined to attack us, therefore if your Honour &c. are determined not to comply with his demand, we request you will send us a supply of men, as our garrison is very weak, however we think it adviseable for your Honour &c. to write a letter to the Nabob immediately.

4. *Ditto, ditto,* 31 *May,* 1756.(2)

We wrote your Honour &c. the 25th instant that that evening Aumee Beg and Asmult Cawn *jemidars* came upon the Factory with their forces, and have ever since been very troublesome in preventing provisions and other necessaries being brought into the Factory. We are informed orders are gone to Dacca and all the *aurungs*,[2] to stop the Honourable Company's business.

We have certain advices that Hackembeg, and his *duan* Hurrischowdree have been the occasion of this stoppage by their false representations and insinuations relating to our digging a ditch and raising fortifications in Calcutta. We leave to your Honour &c.'s judgment whether it would not be adviseable to represent this to the Nabob, and that Hackembeg had under various pretences for many years past, extorted large sums from us, and impeded our business by erecting of *chowkeys*,[3] in different places of the river and exacting large sums from all boats that pass, and has also occasioned a great loss to the Company by his *duans*, Thessendel[4] and Hurrischowdree, taking up and fleecing our merchants, by which many of them are rendered incapable of paying

[1] A native military officer.
[2] Factories for piece goods.
[3] Posts for the levy of tolls.
[4] Possibly Kissendas or Krishna Das.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

their ballances; by which oppressive means, on us and other merchants, Thessendel on his death was possessed of near 8 *lacks*[1] of rupees, which Hackembeg we are informed seized to his own use.

We hear the Nabob is near Rajamaul and it is very uncertain when he will return and what his schemes are.

5. *Letter from the Nawab to Coja Wajid, dated Rajmehal, 28 May,* 1756.

It has been my design to level the English fortifications raised within my jurisdiction on account of their great strength. As I have nothing at present to divert me from the execution of that resolution I am determined to make use of this opportunity; for which reason I am returning from Rajahmaul and shall use the utmost expedition in my march that I may arrive before Calcutta as soon as possible. If the English are contented to remain in my country they must submit to have their fort razed, their ditch filled up, and trade upon the same terms they did in the time of the Nabob Jaffeir Cawn[2]; otherwise I will expel them entirely out of the provinces of which I am *Subah*;[3] which I swear to do before God and our prophets. Should any person plead ever so strongly in their behalf it will avail them nothing, as I am fully determined to reduce that nation to the above mentioned conditions and I require that you will not on any account speak in their favour. Enclosed you will receive *perwannahs*[4] for the French, Dutch, and Danes, in which I have assured them of my favour. I request you will deliver them, and see they are well used in their trade and other respects. Endeavour to engage those nations to prevent the English resettling themselves after I have drove them out.

(*The following paragraph was wrote at the bottom in the Nabob's own hand.*)

I swear by the Great God and the Prophets that unless the English consent to fill up their ditch, raze their fortifications and trade upon the same terms they did in the time of Nabob Jaffeir

[1] One *lakh* = one hundred thousand.
[2] Murshid Kuli Jafar Khan, Nawab of Bengal, 1704-1726.
[3] Viceroy or governor. [4] Official letters, grants or orders.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Cawn I will not hear anything in their behalf and will expel them totally out of my country.

6. *Letter from the Nawab to Coja Wajid, dated Muxadavad, 1 June, 1756.*

I have received your letter acknowledging the receipt of my indent for broad cloth, horses &c., that my *chawbuck swar*[1] had seen and approved of two horses in Calcutta and that the English had sent me one of them as a present by the *chawbuck swar*. I must repeat my desire for complying with my indent of broad cloth. The horse which the English have delivered my *chawbuck swar*, I direct you to return them again, as they have neither regarded my orders nor live with me upon a good understanding, for which reason I will not accept of their present and therefore insist on its being sent back. I have three substantial motives for extirpating the English out of my country, one that they have built strong fortifications and dug a large ditch in the King's[2] dominions contrary to the established laws of the country; The second is that they have abused the privilege of their *dustucks*[3] by granting them to such as were no ways entitled to them, from which practices the King has suffered greatly in the revenue of his Customs; The third motive is that they give protection to such of the King's subjects as have by their behaviour in the employs they were entrusted with made themselves liable to be called to an account and instead of giving them [up] on demand they allow such persons to shelter themselves within their bounds from the hands of justice. For these reasons it is become requisite to drive them out. If they will promise to remove the foregoing complaints of their conduct and will agree to trade upon the same terms as other merchants did in the times of the Nabob Jaffeir Cawn I will then pardon their fault and permit their residence here, otherwise I will shortly expel that nation. Upon what pretence will the French attempt to attack them in the river; which they have never done since the settlement of Europeans in

[1] A rough-rider, groom, or jockey.

[2] The King or Emperor of Delhi, to whom the Nawabs of Bengal were nominally subject.

[3] Certificates that goods or merchandise belonged to the English Company and was therefore free from all tolls.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the country? I recommend it to you to endeavour by good usage to engage the French to attack the English on the river while I besiege them on shore; and the easier to induce them thereto, you may promise from me, that I will deliver the town of Calcutta into their hands as soon as I have made myself master of it.'

(*The following paragraph was wrote in the Nabob's own hand at the bottom of the letter.*)

Please to acquaint the English minutely of my resolutions. If they are willing to comply with those terms they may remain, otherwise they will be expelled the country.

7. *Letter from the Nawab to Coja Wajid, in the way to Calcutta.*

I have seized Mr. Watts, the English Chief at Cossimbuzar (who has acted very unlike a Chief), and have delivered him over to the charge of Hussein Ally Beg Cawn.[1] I now dispatch Nazir Mahmud Daliel to you and direct you to seize all ships, sloops and vessels belonging to my subjects and deliver them to Mahmud Beg; desire the French, Dutch and Danes to be expeditious in getting their vessels of force in readiness to accompany my land army and attack the English by the river while I besiege them on shore. I have sent them *perwannahs* likewise to that purport; and (God willing) I shall soon appear before Calcutta.

(*The following paragraph was wrote in the Nabob's own hand at the bottom of the letter.*)

I swear by the Majesty of God I will not permit the English to remain settled in my country.

8. *Letter from Messrs. Watts, Collet and Batson to the Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 2 June,* 1756.

Another large body of forces with a train of artillery is now marching to the Factory. Our *vacqueel* has ten *peons*[2] upon him and is ordered not to come to the Factory, and all entercourse with the country people [has been] put a stop to. We have great reason to expect we shall be soon attacked, therefore request your Honour &c. will immediately send us a party of at least 100 men

[1] Son of Hakim Beg (see No. 13). In other letters (e.g., No. 9) Mr. Watts is said to have been placed in the charge of Hakim Beg himself.

[2] Country foot soldiers or attendants.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

as privately as possible by way of Kisnagah river and march over land from thence. We are with respect etc. etc.

9. *Translation of extracts from a letter from M. Vernet*[1] *and Council, Cossimbazar, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated 3 June, 1756.*[2]

The Prince left on the 16th of last month with the greater part of his troops and artillery in the direction of Rajmehal in order, as was rumoured, to make an attack on the province of Purneah, but having received some intelligence concerning the conduct of the English at Calcutta that was not published here, he speedily returned and had their fortified settlement invested by several bodies of troops. Raja Durlabh Ram has even got beyond Tribenikhali with a few guns and has addressed a letter direct to the first undersigned, enclosing a *parwana* from the Nawab, a copy of which we have the honour to present herewith to Your Honour, together with the reply of the first undersigned to Durlabh Ram's letter.

* * * * *

The English having acted very manfully at the commencement sent word to Durlabh Ram that they would await two shots out of respect to the Prince, but that he should take care not to fire a third, for that they would then show who they were. But that laudable intention only lasted until yesterday evening, when their Chief had the infamy to allow himself to be prevailed upon by the lamentation and tears of his wife so far as to write a cowardly letter to Durlabh Ram, in which he entirely submitted to the will of the Prince, and one hour after date at the invitation of the said Durlabh Ram, he went with his steward[3] like one distracted, in his nightdress,[4] having only two foot soldiers before him, to meet him. Durlabh Ram received them very courteously and conducted them to the Prince, who instantly ordered them to be pinioned and after keeping them standing for about an hour and a half on the shore among the common people, he had them brought before him and delivered into the hands of Harktsiembeek (? Hakim Beg) for safe

[1] George Lodowijk Vernet, chief of the Dutch factory at Cossimbazar.

[2] Vernet Papers, the Hague.

[3] *Oppermeester.* At first Mr. Watts went with his surgeon, Dr. Forth; Mr. Collet was summoned later on.

[4] *Camisool.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

custody until the chief Watts should have signed three *machalcas*,[1] one to surrender the family and rich possessions of Raja Balav, one to razé their works at Calcutta and one to pay thenceforth the inland trade tolls.

All these matters would not have gone so far, if they had stuck to their first defiant attitude, for the Prince was so frightened and dejected that he had not the courage to order a shot to be fired; nay, he even sent in the morning a *harkara*,[2] and in the afternoon a horseman, to the first undersigned to assure him of his friendship and ask for assistance, and at about seven o'clock he sent Mir Khoda Yar Khan to the first undersigned to again pay him his compliments and assure him of his friendship, together with the Prince's orders to write to you with due speed that [you] were to be in readiness to assist him with our ships at the river-side to take Calcutta, when he would give us that place as a recompense, and that he expected an immediate reply, in order to be able to arrange his journey accordingly.

To all which, after having first returned the above compliments, the first undersigned replied that we were powerless to assist the Prince here in any way and that he could assure him there were no ships in the river, nor were any expected for some months to come, but that he would inform your Honour of his orders. The *Royrayan*[3] and Durlabh Ram again sent word yesterday to the first undersigned through several messengers 'that he should nevertheless carry out the Prince's wishes,' which shows that great fear exists among his people.

10. *Translation of a letter from M. Vernet and Council, Cossimbazar, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated* 4 *June,* 1756.[4]

Since our respectful missive of yesterday, a duplicate of which we annex, we have the honour to communicate to your Honour in reference to the cowardly behaviour of the English that their Second in command, and a Member of the Council, have com-

[1] Formal agreements binding to performance under stated penalties.

[2] A messenger or spy.

[3] A Hindu title for the chief Treasury Officer under the Muhammadan Government.

[4] Vernet Papers, the Hague.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

mitted the same folly as their Chief, namely, to surrender to their enemy by whom they have been very badly entertained, whereupon the Prince ordered the fort to be taken, and sent Raja Durlabh Ram with the vanguard of the army in the direction of Calcutta, who will be followed to-morrow by the Prince with the rest of his forces, with the view of laying siege to that place, Durlabh Ram taking along with him the aforesaid chief Watts, but [the latter] was again brought back to the fort to deliver over to the Moors the ammunition of war to be found there, which was actually done, all the other effects being placed under seal and all the military disarmed, so that the military captain there, Nollet,[1] from sheer despair, stabbed himself with a poniard.

11. *Letter from Messrs. Watts, Collet and Batson to Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 4 June, 1756.*

Since our last yesterday another considerable body of forces are come upon the Factory under the command of four *jemmidars*, and more are expected this evening. There is also a party and tents on the other side of the river opposite to the Factory where we hear they intend to place their cannon. The Nabob is expected in the city the day after to-morrow. We have information by some people that the Nabob intends attacking us and from others that they only threaten us in order that your Honour &c. may the sooner comply with their demand in filling up the ditch and pulling down what works you have begun upon, in which he seems peremptory. We therefore desire your Honour &c. will either send us up a body of men that we may be able to defend ourselves or write to the Nabob that you will immediately comply with his demand.

Our doctor having been sent to Kessore Cawn and Cossumally Cawn, two of the principal *jummadars* who came upon the Factory this morning, they informed him that the Nabob was angry with us on no other account than upon your Honour &c. building a draw-bridge at Perrins and the octagon at Mr. Kelsal's garden which was blown down two years ago in the storm and now made larger, which they have taken for a new fortification, and they say that in case you will break down the drawbridge and the

[1] Lieutenant John Elliot. According to other accounts he shot himself when he was ordered to surrender, rather than submit to the insults of the Moorish soldiers.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

octagon the forces will be immediately withdrawn; if not, we must stand to the consequence.

Since writing the above we have received the inclosed letter from our *vacqueel* who is at the City.[1]

By the best intelligence we can get, we have about two or three thousand forces stationed about the Factory.

If your Honour &c. will write an *arasdass*[2] to the Nabob that you will immediately obey his orders we are in hopes he will put an end to this troublesome affair.

12. *Letter from Mr. Collet to Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 4 June,* 1756.

Since writing to your Honours our Factory has been invested by the Nabob's whole force and a large train of artillery with repeated orders to attack us unless the Chief went in person to the Nabob, which he complied with as the only method we thought of to prevent the Company being involved in war and losing all the Company's effects at the Subordinates, as our garrison was very weak both in men and ammunition, and the gun carriages mostly rotten and a scarcity of provisions; since which Messrs. Collet and Batson were likewise sent for, in order as they said to accommodate matters, upon which they thought it was most adviseable to go, a *perwannah* coming at the same time to take off all the forces from the Factory except Omubeg and his people.

This morning the Chief and Second and Mr. Batson were accompanying Roydullub on his march, it is said, to Calcutta when they stopped us and told us there was an order come from the Nabob for the Second to return to the Fort and deliver up all the cannon and ammunition which we was obliged to comply with and are now delivering. The Nabob is said to march to-morrow to Calcutta with all his forces, which is computed to be about 50,000 men.

The Chief and Mr. Batson are still with Roydullub, the Nabob's vanguard.

13. *Letter from Francis Sykes to Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 4 June,* 1756.

As we have been in hourly expectation for these two days past of an attack from the Nabob's army, now reckoned to consist

[1] Murshidabad. [2] A written petition or memorial.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of upwards of 50,000 men besides a train of artillery, Mr. Watts and the Council have been trying all methods to accommodate matters rather than go to extremities; they after writing several *arasdasses* to the Nabob, and also applying to such persons whom they thought might represent our case in a proper manner, all which efforts have not hitherto had any success. However the 2nd instant Meer Hossein Alli, Hussembeg's son, came into the Factory and informed the gentlemen that the Nabob wanted to talk to the Chief, upon which it was thought adviseable for him to go immediately with our doctor, accompanied with Meer Hossein Alli who promised him to introduce him to the Nabob. I do not as yet hear this has had the effect expected. They obliged Mr. Watts to sign a *machulka*, which to the best of my remembrance signifies as follows, 1st No protection is to be given in Calcutta to any of the Nabob's subjects, 2d The draw-bridge at Perrings and the new fortifications are to be demolished, and 3d no *dusticks* to be given to any of the black merchants, and upon Mr. Watts' wanting to come to Cossimbazar again, they prevented him, saying they understood his signing any paper would be of no validity except all the Gentlemen in Council signed it, and that he should remain till the rest came, upon which Messrs. Collet and Batson went in expectation to sign it, but when they arrived a *perwannah* came from the Nabob, as the Gentlemen write me, with orders for the Second to return and deliver up all our guns and ammunitions and for Omerbeg to remain at the Factory only. Since writing the above Mr. Collet arrived here, who agreeable to the Nabob's orders has delivered up the cannon, powder, &c. The Nabob is marching to Calcutta with 50,000 men, takes Messrs. Batson and Watts along with him. What the Nabob's intentions are we at present cannot learn but imagine by most that he is going to Calcutta.

P.S.—This I write by the desire of Mr. Watts who is in extream low spirits.

14. *Translation of a letter from M. Vernet and Council, Cossimbazar, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated* 6 *June*, 1756.[1]

The distressful circumstances resulting here from the surrender of the English fort have somewhat perplexed us, the more so, as

[1] Vernet Papers, the Hague.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

being entirely destitute of men, and our powder and other ammunition being also very insignificant, we are quite unable to operate against the fury of the Prince, if he should keep his word, to wit, that if he should succeed before Calcutta, he will serve all the other nations here in the same way as he has treated the English, who are locked up in their rooms on rice and water, whilst the common people are thrown into chains and in all probability will very shortly fall victims to the fury of that raging tyrant. We therefore most humbly request your Honour to send us as speedily as possible (with 60 military and 2 quarter-gunners and 40 arquebusiers), 10 cannons with a sufficiency of balls and grape-shot for the aforesaid pieces, linstocks, rammers with sponge-heads, a few hand-grenades and 1,000 lbs. of powder, and also to license us to advance the point[1] at the south side of the Governor's residence in order to be able to keep the road past the fort open along that side, as we have done with that on the north side, and, if need be, to construct a stone battery before the gate.

As no sealed letters can be despatched in such troublous times, without their being intercepted and stopped on the road, we should like to have a positive order how we are to act in case of attack, for no reliance whatever is to be placed on the oath and promises of the Nawab, as has been seen in many circumstances with the English, who are always too dilatory in giving information in these matters. *Rayrayan*, Gholam Hosein, and all the important courtiers have sent word to the first undersigned to take care and be on his guard. We beg to be favoured with a speedy reply, whilst we have the honour to subscribe ourselves with much respect &c. &c.

P.S.—Flight will be attended with many difficulties, for at such a time the river will be occupied on all sides by the boats of the Nawab. Mr. Forth, Surgeon of the English, has just been to us and claimed our protection; which we have granted him, partly because he is not a servant of the Company and partly because the *jemadars* who are in the fort of the English themselves told him, that now it was his time to flee. Howbeit we request your Honour's orders in the matter.

[1] Any projecting work as, e.g., a bastion.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

15. *Letter from the Council, Fort William, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated 7 June,* 1756.[1]

The Nawab has taken possession of our factory at Cossimbazar with a large force and cut off our communications with those in the Fort. We are not without anxious fears that he will undertake some step that will reduce us to great straits, which we have good grounds for believing from certain reports we have received that a considerable section of his force is marching to get below [to cross] the river, as also a great quantity of ammunition, both of which have advanced 6 or 7 *kos*[2] on this side of Cossimbazar and it is thus impossible to tell where he will stop; we have, therefore, considered it our duty to point out to your Honour and the Council the danger that lies in the allowing such an insult to one of the European nations settled here to pass unheeded, and request for the sake of our King, and by virtue of the treaty of alliance existing between us, that should we be attacked you will as far as possible render us every aid and assistance in your power. We flatter ourselves that you will not fail in this, owing to the friendship between your Honour and our nation, it being to our common interest to prevent all such annoyances. We request you to make us acquainted, as soon as possible, with your decisions in this respect, and how many soldiers, or other aid, we may expect, for the calamitous state of affairs here renders assistance imperatively necessary. We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, PAUL RICHARD PEARKES, J. Z. HOLWELL, W. MACKETT, EDWARD EYRE and W. BAILLIE.

16. *Letter from Council, Fort William, to Council, Fort St. George, dated 7 June,* 1756.

Since writing to you under date the 4th instant, we have received further intelligence that the Nabob has ordered a considerable body of forces and a large train of artillery to march down the river, and that they are 6 or 8 *coss* on this side of Cossimbuzar. All communication between us and that Factory is entirely cut off and we are obliged to depend on reports for what may relate to

[1] Bengal Correspondence, the Hague. Not in the English Records, but translated from a Dutch copy.

[2] A *kos* is, in Bengal, about 2 or 2½ miles.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

them. From these appearances and the close investure of Cossimbuzar upon so frivolous a pretence as that of Mr. Kelsal's octagon and the draw-bridge at Perrin's we have great reason to imagine his designs extend much further than is at present known or declared. You will therefore perceive what consequence the least delay in reinforcing this garrison may be of to the Honourable Company, and we doubt not will send us a detachment the minute you receive these advices. We are &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, PAUL RICHARD PEARKES, J. *Z.* HOLWELL, EDWARD EYRE, WM. BAILLIE.

P.S.—Since writing the foregoing we have received the unforunate news of Cossimbuzar Factory being delivered over into the hands of the Nabob as you will observe by the enclosed copys of letters received from thence.

R. DRAKE, JUNIOR, PAUL R. PEARKES, J. *Z.* HOLWELL.

17. *Letter from Council, Fort William, to Council, Fort St. George, dated* 8 *June,* 1756.

Inclosed are triplicates of what we have wrote you within these few days, and coppies of the letters we have received from the Gentlemen at Cossimbuzar with an account of the delivering up that place to the Nabob the 4th instant.

From those advices your Honour &c. will observe he is determined to march against this Settlement and we have received authentick advices that his artillery and a considerable body of his forces are already on their way down. We are preparing everything in our power to make as vigorous a defence as possible, but as our garrison is extreamly weak we shall endeavour to amuse him and avoid coming to hostilities as long as we can in hopes of your sending us a sufficient reinforcement (when you know our situation) not only to repel those troops he may bring against this place; but to recover the Honourable Company's Factory at Cossimbuzar.

As our safety and honour must therefore depend chiefly on the relief you are to send us, we are again to request in the most earnest manner, as you tender the interest of our employers so deeply concerned in this Settlement, as you regard the lives and propertys of the inhabitants, and as you value the honour of our

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Nation, all of which are now at stake, that you do not on any motive whatsoever neglect to supply us with the number of men we have demanded, which is the only means left to recover Cossimbuzar, to defend ourselves, and to transact the Company's affairs on any footing of security. Should you after all we have said and urged upon this head either refuse or delay the reinforcement we have demanded, we hope your Honour &c. will excuse us, if we exculpate ourselves by protesting against you in behalf of our Honourable Employers, for all the damages and ill consequences of such default.

We are likewise extreamly deficient in musquets, shot, bayonets, small field-pieces, mortars, and most kind of military stores, a proportionable quantity of which we shall likewise expect from your Honour &c. We are &c. &c. ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, P. R. PEARKES, W. FRANKLAND, J. Z. HOLWELL, W. MACKETT, W. BAILLIE, EDWARD EYRE.

P.S.—As it will be impossible to make gun-powder should our town be closely invested, and as it is probable the quantity we have by us and shall be able to make before his arrival, will all be expended by the time your reinforcement comes, we think it would be proper for your Honour &c. to send us likewise as much of that article as you can.

18. *Translation of a letter from the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, to Council, Fort William, dated* 8 *June*, 1756.[1]

HONOURED SIR AND GENTLEMEN,—We have heard with great regret of the Nawab's intention to attack you, but to assist you as requested in your missive of yesterday lies beyond our power, as your Honours must fain fairly acknowledge, if you consider the uncertainty as to whether Calcutta alone is the goal, also the bad situation of our fort and the weakness of our force in Bengal, we having to employ native *barkandazes*[2] in all troubles that arise. And whereas your Honours require the assistance referred to in your aforesaid letter, in the name of His Royal Majesty of Great Britain, and especially by virtue of the treaty existing between the two nations as allies, to render you assistance as far as possible in

[1] Bengal Correspondence, the Hague.

[2] A matchlock man, but commonly applied to a man armed with a sword and shield, who acts as doorkeeper, watchman, guard, or escort.—*Wilson.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

case of need, we have to reply thereto that, leaving alone that the orders of our Superiors charge us to remain neutral in all cases that do not concern us, we cannot see that the reasons upon which your Honours rely necessitate that we, who are established here as simple merchants, should on that account be obliged or feel it our duty, to expose ourselves to dangerous troubles from which we are not sure we shall remain exempt, and as little do we gather from the contents of the said treaty (unless there be another apart from the one we mean, and which is not in our possession) that the assistance we are bound to render to each other in virtue thereof (when we do not know whether there is room for mediation or not) can in this case be rendered without exposing ourselves to the displeasure of our masters.

We have the honour to be, Sir and Gentlemen, your Honours' most humble servants, A. BRISDOM, R. H. ARMENAULT, L. J. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. VAN SCEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, A. HOOREMAN, and S. CROMBON. HOOGLEY, at Fort Gustavus.

19. *Translation of a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to M. De la Bretesche at Patna, dated* 9 *June*, 1756.[1]

SIR,—You will have heard by common report of the capture of the English Factory at Cossimbazar, and the orders given by the Nawab to his troops to march towards Calcutta with intent to attack it. He has written several letters to M. Renault[2] by which he informs him that as there are reasons which oblige him to chastise the English and drive them out of Bengal he offers to put us in possession of Calcutta and assures us he will support and protect us in every way on condition we assist him with all our forces against that nation. Whatever the advantages he offers us on this occasion, as it is not in our power to conform to his wishes without having been in the first instance authorised to do so by our Superiors, we have agreed that the Director should write and thank him for his favourable disposition towards us, and at the same time excuse ourselves for our absolute inability not only to accept his obliging offers but also to supply him with the

[1] Pondicherry Records.

[2] Chief or Director of the French factory at Chandernagore, the chief settlement of the French in Bengal.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

assistance he demands. Not knowing what effect our refusal will have on the Nawab's mind and fearing he may take it in bad part, we think we cannot take too much precaution against the resentment he may possibly feel towards us and which must be expected from a man so violent and passionate. It is for this reason, Sir, we advise you to be on your guard against whatever may happen, and to take every precaution which may seem advisable for the security of your Factory and your own persons.

20. *Translation of a letter from M. Vernet and Council, Cossimbazar, to M. La Tour*[1] *at Patna, dated* 10 *June,* 1756.[2]

Since the death of Aliverdi Khan, Siraj-uddaula has grown more and more violent and has pushed his fury so far as to lay siege with his whole army on the 25th of last month, for some trifling reason, to the English fort here, which he captured owing to the faint-heartedness of the English, removing therefrom all the artillery and ammunition and putting all the effects both of the Company and of private persons under seal, carrying all those who were in the fort prisoners to Moorshedabad, except the officer of the troops who shot himself through the head and so ended his life, and the Chief, the Second in command and also a Member of the Council whom he took along with him in the direction of Calcutta, whither he has marched with his forces to lay siege to it. Hoping that the storm may soon blow over, we remain with greetings &c. &c.

21. *Letter from the Council, Fort William, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated* 13 *June,* 1756.[3]

We have received Your Honour's letter in reply to the request made by us for assistance against the Nawab who is now marching at the head of a great army to attack Calcutta, and we regret to see your Honour and the Council so cool and indifferent. Your Honour should consider the alliance and friendship between His Britannic Majesty and the States-General of the United Provinces. We cannot believe that it is by the orders of their High Mighti-

[1] Jacques Latour, chief at the Dutch factory at Patna.

[2] Vernet Papers, the Hague.

[3] Bengal Correspondence, the Hague. Not in the English Records, but translated from a Dutch copy.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

nesses, your Masters; that you are withheld from offering a helping hand to a colony of Great Britain, attacked and brought into great straits as it now is without the least grounds upon a specious pretext; and we venture to think that your Honour is mistaken as regards the instructions of your Company, which we understand can refer only to trade matters and the advantages thereof in reference to the Government. Besides we further think you wrongly conceive your own advantages in not taking a side and in allowing the English to be exterminated by the pernicious *Subahdar*[1] without making any effort to prevent it. His forces are much more numerous than they appear to be and we have received full information as to his intentions and of his purpose to extirpate the power of all Europeans having possessions in this kingdom. We have written the above also to the Director and Council at Chandernagore and have received from them a most satisfactory answer, with the assurance they will lend us a helping hand whenever, and as far as it lies in their power, the same as if they were in alliance with us, and they presume you will be one of the party. With which view we again address this to you and take the liberty of pointing out to you the dangerous consequences likely to ensue from your Honours holding aloof, during these mutual negotiations, from the protection of our goods and possessions. But should your Honours still resolve to look on as spectators of our destruction and refuse us such relief as may be in your power, we shall feel compelled to lay your Honours' actions in the strongest terms before our Masters who, we entertain no doubt, will lay the matter before the Parliament of England, and we leave to your own judgment what the feelings of that assembly will be when they hear that the Directors of the Dutch East India Company refuse the natives and the English colonists to send a strong force, of whatever kind the assistance required may be, to a colony of that Crown to empower her to resist the attacks of a rash, thoughtless, fool-hardy and covetous prince who, without the least show of reason, has resolved to venture his utmost against us.

We hope that what we have urged will have great weight with your Honours and thus prevail upon you to enter into a triple

[1] Governor of a *subah*, or province,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

alliance with us and his Honour the Director and Council at Chandernagore, and thus be able to ensure the preservation of our trade, but should our expectations in that respect be disappointed and (in spite of our arguments) you decide merely to play the part of lookers-on, we feel it our duty collectively and individually to protest against the consequences of such a course on the part of your Honours and the results that may ensue therefrom, and do hereby protest against his Honour the Director, Adriaan Bisdom, and the members of his Council at Hoogley on the one side for our Sovereign Lord the King of Great Britain, and on the other side for our Masters the Governor and Directors of the East India Company in London, on account of your refusal to us of assistance and help against the enterprise of the Nawab of Murshidabad, Suraj-uddaula, who is now marching at the head of a great army to attack this place.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, J. Z. HOLWELL, W. MACKETT, EDWARD EYRE and W. BAILLIE.

22. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the Council, Chandernagore, to the captain of the French East India Company's ship in the Road of Balasore, dated* 15 *June*, 1756.[1]

In the present circumstances of the war between the Nawab and the English, which make the neighbourhood of Calcutta dangerous, we feel we ought to instruct you to follow the directions sent you by the Director to day, and not to neglect any of the precautions he prescribes for the safety of your ship and the money which you may be bringing.

23. *Translation of a letter from the Director and Council, Hugli, to Council, Fort William, dated* 16 *June*, 1756.[2]

We were greatly surprised to find in your esteemed favour of the 13th instant a protest against the conduct that our circumstances compel us to follow in the troubles between your Honours and the Nawab of Bengal. We are not aware that the engagements between the Crown of Great Britain and our country extend to the colonies here in India. If your Honours are cognizant of any

[1] Pondicherry Records. [2] Bengal Correspondence, the Hague.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

such undertaking, it shows great remissness in that it was not communicated to us; meanwhile it is certain that the complete harmony existing between our nations mutually obliges us to assist each other in all perils incurred by mischance and without any fault of our own, where it may be done without any too great danger. But that we should expose ourselves to evident peril, merely in the hope of saving you therefrom, our Masters, will surely not, any more than the illustrious Parliament of England, expect of us, provided you be pleased to do us the justice (as we hereby request) to add to the representations to be made to the said illustrious body also a picture of the circumstances in which we are placed, *viz.*, surrounded by the Moors in a fort not near so capable of defence as yours at Cossimbazar used to be. Our force is but very small, and our artillery and ammunition deficient in quality, we having to make shift with Bengal gunpowder. The moneys of our Company are spread all over the *aurungs*, besides what is deposited at Cossimbazar and in the Mint; all this, at the least deviation from neutrality, we might well look upon as lost, and our servants at Cossimbazar and Patna as delivered over to the rage of the Nawab. Would that not be for us a perilous undertaking and should we not be answerable to our Masters who have prescribed to us a strict maintenance of neutrality in all cases that relate in any way to the native Government?

We flatter ourselves that such a true description of our circumstances will fully justify our conduct in these matters; noting further for your consideration that by several *parwanas* the Nawab has importuned us in vain for men, war-ammunition and sloops, rather (we think) to be able to pick a quarrel with us in the future than with the idea of leading us to suchlike [neutrality] violating concessions.

We have, &c., &c.

24. *Translation of a letter from M. Le Conte to M. Courtin at Dacca, dated Chandernagore,* 19 *June,* 1756.[1]

SIR,—You know already, from what M. Sinfray[2] has said on the subject of the complaints which the Nawab has against the

[1] Fort Saint George Select Committee Consultations, 9 November, 1756.

[2] Secretary to the French Council at Chandernagore.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

English, the reasons for the war which he makes upon them, and also all that has happened at Cossimbazar. The capture of their fort in that place far from satisfying Siraj-uddaula has only elevated his courage. The facility with which he got possession of it has, doubtless, persuaded him that with a little trouble he may also drive the English from Calcutta and so make himself master of all the treasures which the *Begum*[1] of Newajis Mahmet Khan and Raj Balab have sent thither. Filled with this idea and the name which he is going to make for himself by this exploit, he has refused to listen to the representations of any one, even those of his mother, who tried to restrain him by the reproach that he was going to measure his strength against merchants. Immediate orders were given to his army to advance. Of this we have seen several bodies of 4 and 6 and 7 thousand men defile past our barriers with their artillery. He himself set out on the 5th, that is to say, 2 days after the surrender of the English Fort, at the head of 20,000 men. His elephants are said to be as many as 300, his artillery of 500 guns, amongst which are 84 pieces which he took from the English Factory with 500 *maunds*[2] of powder, and 2,000 iron cannon balls. With the exception of the European artillery and its ammunition, the rest of this stuff is not very dangerous, at least to judge by some guns which we saw at the Dutch Gardens[3] where a detachment of horsemen who conducted them stayed for two days, having wandered from their road and having been refused a passage through our Settlement. We went to see them out of curiosity. Nothing is more pitiable than the way in which they are mounted and supplied. People say they have only clay bullets.

Since the departure of Siraj-uddaula from Murshidabad, up to the 15th, we had no news of him and this delay gave rise to many jokes, many persons pretending he was still shut up in his Harem, others that feeling the difficulty of his enterprise he would like to negotiate. In fact an agent of Coja Wajid's wishing to make proposals to M. Drake it was suspected that the Nawab, not to compromise himself, had set this merchant at work; but these rumours were soon dissipated by the arrival of the Nawab, who slept on the 15th in the garden opposite Chinsurah.

[1] Princess. [2] The *man* or *maund* weighs 82 lbs. [3] To the north of Chandernagore.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The agents of the two nations having presented him with our *salaams* in this place, ours was well received and even had two *betels*[1] given him for M. Renault, but as for the Dutch he was not content with refusing them, he showed them very clearly the contempt he had for them and his intention to pay them a visit on his return from Calcutta. The next day we saw him pass over the great plain which is opposite the Factory on the other side of the river. His camels, his elephants, his artillery, occupied us all the morning.

Before his departure from Murshidabad, fearing perhaps that the three nations might support each other, or possibly acting in good faith, he summoned to the *Durbar* the French and Dutch native agents, told them of the resolution he had formed to drive the English out of Bengal, and at the same time asked what assistance he might expect from their Masters in his expedition.

The Dutch agent, who apparently had his lesson all ready, hastened to reply that his Company was only mercantile, not constituted for making war, and that at Chinsurah there were hardly 10 guns and 50 soldiers, including both whites and blacks, but immediately added, and evidently to do us a bad turn, 'Address yourselves to the French, they are very strong at Chandernagore, besides they are people who can never keep quiet, and would ask nothing better than to fight against the English. They are always at war with them, sometimes beaten, sometimes beating, they must always have their arms in their hands.' This reply far from producing the effect expected by the native agent, inspired Siraj-uddaula and his *Durbar* with the greatest contempt for the Dutch, which they showed by many marks of indignation, and at the same time gave them an advantageous idea of our nation, whose courage they know. The Nawab was so pleased [with our agent] that he showed him a thousand friendships, sent him back with two *betels* for M. Law and two for himself, and has publicly declared he will give us Calcutta in full possession, and a *parwana* to that effect if we like. To all these offers he has added that his design is to elevate us to as much honour in Bengal as we are in already on the Madras Coast.

[1] Leaf of the *Piper Betel*, chewed with the dried *areca-nut* and *chunam*, or lime. In Bengal called *Pan*.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

After having thus sold the bear's skin before he has killed the bear, he was so certain that we would accept his offers that some days after he asked our agent whether M. Renault had yet sent his ships to blockade Calcutta by water, whilst his troops surrounded it by land. You must know, Sir, what was the resolution of the Council on this subject, and the answer given him that we could undertake nothing against the English unless authorized from Europe or at least from Pondicherry, seeing that war had not been declared between that nation and ours.

They [the English] had erected two batteries above and below Calcutta, and were entrenched in them and also behind a great ditch which they had drawn round their Settlement, resolved to defend the approaches to their Settlement as long as they could, but the arrival of the Nawab has changed all their plans. At his approach they not only abandoned this enclosure but even the defence of the European town. They have retired into their Fort where they are terribly crowded. The bravado they made at the commencement, in letting no one go out of their Settlement so as to show their confidence, has only served to increase the confusion.

The English are actually shut up in their Fort, round which they have raised a kind of glaçis which entirely protects them. So as not to be stunned by the cries of the women they have had them carried on board the ships, which are ready to make sail to the number of 10 or 12, including the brigantines and boats. They have also, it is said, loaded on them the treasures which are said to have been confided to them. These amount to two *krors*.[1]

25. *Translation of an extract from a letter from Council, Chandernagore, to M. De La Bretesche, Patna, dated 20 June, 1756.*[2]

It does not appear that we have any violence to fear from Siraj-uddaula, whom we thought we had rendered ill-disposed towards us by our refusal to join him, although we made use of all possible means to satisfy him and had reason to flatter ourselves that he appreciated the force of our excuses. He has replied to the Director in very gracious terms, asking only that since we cannot assist him, we will be careful not to assist the

[1] One *kror* = one hundred *lakhs*—that is, 10,000,000. Here refers to rupees.

[2] Pondicherry Records.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

English. He received very favourably the *wakil*, whom we sent with our compliments when he passed our Colony to go to Calcutta, and bade him return with the same compliments on his part. . . .

We have no exact knowledge of what has happened in Calcutta. The English have abandoned the Town, the inhabitants of which are fleeing for refuge and dispersing in all directions. The English have retired into their fort, round which they have made a very broad ditch and raised a glaçis. It is said also that they have put all their money on the ships they have [in port], on which also they have embarked all the women, and that in this state they are waiting for the Nawab. There have been several small fights in which they have lost some officers and soldiers. The Moor loss is estimated as high as 1,500 men. Besides the large army with the Nawab, which is said to number 60,000 men, with a great number of elephants and many guns, he is still assembling troops who come every day to join those at Calcutta. If large reinforcements do not speedily reach the English, they are likely to see themselves forced to give in.

The Nawab has no grievance against us and he had very great ones against the English, who, besides, behaved with a pride which we cannot be reproached with. We think this news will contribute not a little to quiet your mind.

21 *June.*

Since the above letter was written we have heard that the Nawab made himself master of the factory of Calcutta yesterday at 5 o'clock. Those of the English who could not escape on board the ships and who made no resistance have been plundered but their lives spared. We do not yet know the fate of those on shore and whether it will be possible for them to gain the ships.

This event, which we did not expect, at least so quickly, throws us into great embarrassment, as we do not know what the Nawab's intentions may be and whether he will not try to annoy us As we ought certainly to be regarded by him in a light different from that in which he holds the English, and as he has by no means the same grievances against us as he had against them, we flatter ourselves he will not proceed to extremities against us.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

We shall take care to inform you of the disposition he appears to be in towards us.

You will do well to be always on your guard as much as possible.

26. *Translation of a letter from M. Le Conte to M. Courtin at Dacca, dated Chandernagore, 21 June, 1756.*[1]

The *pattamar*[2] having been delayed two days gives me time and opportunity to acquaint you with the capture of Calcutta. This event which in truth we did not expect is unfortunately only too certain. These are the particulars which we have heard.

On the 19th we knew by the wounded who passed that there had been a sortie made from the fort by the English in which they had killed nearly 1,500 men of the Moors, but that they had retired precipitately and had been obliged to spike the field guns they had taken. In spite of this success, the spirit of giddiness and confusion had so taken possession of them that they refused to obey any longer. Mr. Drake having withdrawn the previous day, Mr. Holwell, who found himself in command, made not the least resistance. The Moors having climbed on to the houses which command the fort, quietly established their batteries there, and at their ease shot at the English who did not venture to reply. It is said they did not fire ten shot from their guns. The want of order caused the soldiers, who had got possession of the warehouses, to be continually drunk and incapable of serving. In short, yesterday the fire having caught the warehouses the soldiers, instead of trying to extinguish it, took fright and fled pell mell on board the ships. Mr. Holwell seeing their flight immediately wrote to the Nawab to ask for terms and hoisted the Moorish flag.[3] At this signal the Moors who surrounded the fort, thinking their comrades had effected an entry, threw themselves like madmen on the walls, and against the gates, which latter they broke open. This event which happened at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and which we heard of only at 11 o'clock in the evening was accompanied by the saddest circumstances for the English, their

[1] Fort Saint George Select Committee Consultations, 9 November, 1756.

[2] Messenger.

[3] From an old French map this appears to have been a white flag carrying a crescent, but I can find no certain information on the point.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

largest vessel[1] with a very large number of people on board ran aground on a bank close to Calcutta and is there still. The Nawab has loaded a number of boats with straw with which he intends to set the ship on fire if it does not surrender.[2]

27. *Letter from Council, Fort William, to Mr. Adrian Bisdom, dated Aboard the ship 'Dodalay,' 25 June, 1756.*[3]

Highly esteemed Sir,—We address this to you from Voltha [Fulta] whither we have been obliged to retire with a few of the inhabitants who have fled from Calcutta, and being entirely destitute of any kind of provisions and clothing, and of the bare necessaries of life, as also in great want of anchors and cables, etc., for our ships, we beg to express our heartfelt wish that you may favour us with aid and succour in our distress and help us from Hoogley with all kinds of liquors and clothing, together with anchors, cables and tackle, and also give instructions to your officials at Voltha, etc., to assist us as far as lies in their power, we always being ready to reimburse the value of the same.

As we hope that your Government may enjoy due tranquillity, we flatter ourselves that, viewing the intimate agreement between the two nations, your Honour will not fail to send us information from time to time as to whether there is a possibility of our being able to return in personal safety to Calcutta, as regards which point please put yourself in our position and favour us with the earliest intelligence concerning the purpose of the Nawab and the progress he is making. We are, &c., &c.,

ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, W. MACKETT.

28. *Translation of Consultations of the Dutch Council, Hugli, 25, 26 and 27 June, 1756.*[4]

(*a*) *Friday, 25 June, 1756. Forenoon; General meeting. All present.*

The day before yesterday a *parwana* to the following effect having been received from the Nawab Siraj-uddaula:

[1] Probably refers to the *Prince George*, which ran ashore off Perrin's Garden. The *Diligence* was wrecked the 24th June near Budge-Budge.

[2] The *Prince George* was burned by the Moors (see Fort Saint George letter to Court, dated 28 March, 1757, paragraph 9).

[3] Bengal Correspondence, the Hague. Not in the English Records, but translated from a Dutch copy.

[4] *Ibid.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Translation of a Persian parwana *granted by the Nawab Sirajuddaula to the Honourable Adriaan Bisdom, Director of the Bengal Direction sub-dato 22nd and received here on the 23rd June*, 1756.

'Chief of the merchants and harbinger of friendship Adriaan Bisdom, Director for the Holland Company, live happy and contented!

'I have too frequently written to you from Moorshedabad that you were to join your power to the King's army for the destruction of the wicked English by water, though your not doing so is of no account whatever, and you were asked only to put you to the test, for by God's blessing and help I am so strongly provided that I find myself able to exterminate ten such nations as these English, and if you wish to ensure the continuation of the Company's trade in this country, you will have to act in accordance with what I caused to be made known to you through my friend Faggeruttojaar, Choja Mhameth Wajed;[1] but in the contrary case, it will be all over with your trade in this *Soubaship*, which is a true warning concerning which you must know your own mind.'

(*Translated by M. Koning.*)[2]

The Director then informed the members how, upon receipt of this definitive sentence, he, as was known, called yesterday afternoon, accompanied by Messieurs d'Armenault and Tsinck, on His Highness's favourite Faggeruttezjaar (alias Chodja Wazid) to enquire as to the real purport of His Highness's wishes; that the Moor had plainly declared, without mincing matters, that the Nawab being extremely displeased that we, like the French, had refused to assist him against the English, whenever we were spoken of in private, had said: 'I always thought that the Hollanders were more faithful to the King than that they would have caused him inconvenience about such trifling services as I have asked of them. I have rendered them a considerable service and been at great expense to put down their fellest business rivals, and, maybe, if the results of my enterprise had been in accordance with their wishes, I should have had to return disappointed from a

[1] Coja Wajid, the great Armenian merchant of Hugli. Fakhr-ul-tujjar = chief of merchants; Coja or Khwaja = gentleman or person of distinction.

[2] Martinus Koning, first Clerk to the Council of Policy, Secretary to the Council of Justice, and Translator for the Moorish and Persian languages.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

bootless errand,' and lastly when he, Wazid, went to take leave: 'Tell the Hollanders they must bring me twenty *lacs* of rupees or I will ruin them as I have done the English.' That his Honour on hearing this sinister report and growing almost desperate, had asked the messenger what offence was laid to our charge, adding that we were mere merchants and that His Highness demanded services of us which we neither could nor might render him. If His Excellency were tired of us (as one would be led to suppose from such strange proceedings) it would be better for us to quit Bengal, etc., but that at length Wazid, in reply to the firm language used by his Honour, answered that the Nawab was amenable to no reasons but those that were consistent with his own interests. Further that he would not allow us to leave without first plucking one of our fine feathers, etc. Thereupon he saw no alternative but to take him (Wazid) in hand and, under promise of gratuity to request him to use his powerful influence, in order, if possible, to satisfy the Prince with an ordinary *nazarani*[1] or at least with a mediocre contribution. That he had, thereupon, assured his Honour of his friendship and promised to seize a favourable moment on the morrow when His Highness had slept off his fatigue and was in a good humour, but that, meanwhile, he most seriously recommended his Honour to be sure and bear in mind what a pretentious piece of conceit he had to deal with, not to stick at a trifle, and above all, not to be backward in providing vessels, etc., to facilitate the passage across [the river] of the Nawab and his army.[2] Which report having been listened to, the course taken by his Honour the Director was unanimously approved and it was agreed to make shift and bear the cost of freight for the boats to transfer the army, but for the rest not to agree to the Nawab's demand, unless susceptible of great reduction, as being altogether under constraint.

Thus done and resolved at Hoogley, Fort Gustavus, on the above date, A. BISDOM, R. H. ARMENAULT, L. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. VAN SCHEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, sect., A. HOOREMAN, S. CROMBON.

[1] Complimentary offering to a superior.

[2] In going to Murshidabad from Calcutta it was customary to cross the river at Chandernagore or Hugli.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

(*b*) *Saturday, 26 June, 1756. Forenoon, Extraordinary Meeting. All present.*

After the members of Council were assembled and seated, his Honour the Director informed them how by the arrangement of yesterday the said agent of the Nawab, Facherudtezjaar had that morning through his factor, sent word to his Honour that he had waited upon His Highness yesterday evening at an opportune moment and had shown him that we were innocent of the matter for which we were to be bled and our inability to raise so large a sum, and had so far appeased him that he had left the regulation of our fine to him Facherudtezjaar, Rajah Durlabh Ram and a few more of his trusted courtiers, under the recommendation, however, that they were to bear in mind that he had been put to heavy expenses and had to bear still more. That they, the said Commissioners, in order not to let the favourable spell of good humour pass over bootlessly, had immediately made a computation among themselves based upon our means and the extent of His Highness's wishes and had fixed the amount to be paid at 4 *lacs* or 400,000 rupees for the Nawab and a half-*lac* or 50,000 rupees as a reward for their intercession, it being understood that we should then be exonerated from the *nazarani* payable to all new Nawabs. That he Facherudtezjaar, had he been free, would have lopped off a much more important sum, and willingly have let us off altogether, but that he served an insatiable master, with whom neither his own nor anyone else's honour or life were safe for one moment—a tiger, who felt as little feeling and compunction in massacring a human creature as in killing a fowl. Wherefore he advised us as a friend to acquiesce in their mediation and to await what time would bring, etc. His Honour the Director added that the assertion regarding the natural disposition of the Prince was not at all exaggerated, but was quite true, and that it might be the reason why the mediators, in order not themselves to fall a prey to the Nawab's cruelty, had taken his interests more to heart than ours, but that the old ministers having been dismissed from their posts there was now no other channel than this along which to approach His Highness; that His Highness had that morning sent his Master of Requests (evidently to add force to his exactions) to demand the delivery of our artillery and flags, and had

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

already in anticipation seized upon our village whose inhabitants had already fled, so that it was everywhere crowded with horsemen, musketeers, navvies[1] and other people; that if we were able to maintain good order and discipline we should give the Nawab more trouble than the English had, but that our besiegers counted at least seventy thousand armed men, with better artillery than ours and amply provided with good gunners and all kinds of war ammunition and that we could not possibly hold out against them, and even granting we were able to stand a siege for some length of time, much more would be lost than gained, for that all our servants at Cassimbazaar, Patna and elsewhere would be exposed to the fury of the barbarian and the Company's assets in the respective factories and in the Mint, as well as those deposited at the quarters[2] and the moneys in circulation to the amount of about 46 *lacs* of rupees (or 70 tons of treasure) would be lost in such a case; not to mention that if things turned out adversely our honour would be impaired, our credit broken and probably not fifty *lacs* of rupees would suffice to make good the damage done to the Company, if besides the assets now here we consider what a heavy expenditure would be required for us to be readmitted and to reestablish ourselves, without our even then possessing the conveniences that we have painstakingly acquired here and at the branch factories in process of time; that, however, in spite of all this, the Nawab's demands remain far too exorbitant and the Honourable Director proposed to pray for a reduction by sending in a request in the following terms:

Translation of the Persian arzi,[3] *written by the Honourable Adriaan Bisdom, Director of the Bengal Department to the Nawab Siraj-uddaula, dated* 26 *June*, 1756.

'Renowned Prince. The Hollanders have traded here peacefully for a century and a half, have brought over countless treasures and transported most vast quantities of commodities, under prompt payment of tolls and dues, wherefore they have generally been befriended and countenanced especially by the Princes of the land and, up to the glorious Nawab Souja-ul-molk

[1] Literally 'diggers.' Probably the *coolies* employed in making entrenchments.

[2] '*Quartieren*.' Probably the *aurungs*, the weavers in which received advances of money as a lien upon the produce of cloth.

[3] A petition.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Mahabat Jung[1] inclusive, always endowed with privileges. They have always been faithful to their benefactors, and if ever guilty of a wrongful act they were never backward in granting satisfaction. And yet it has pleased Your Highness to exact a contribution from us much heavier than we are able to pay, considering the calamities that have befallen us on sea and the many losses we have of late years encountered in our commercial transactions. Wherefore I do humbly beseech Your Excellency to confer the great favour upon us of graciously treating us with reasonable moderation in reference to the *nazarani*.

'May Your Highness's power and glory go on increasing.'

(*Translated by M. Koning.*)

To which the members having agreed; it was further unanimously resolved to charge the Company's *wakil* and broker with the handing over of the said missive to their Worships the mediators for delivery unto the Prince and to give the afore-said *wakil* power-of-attorney to make a bid in respect to the contribution demanded, provided it do not exceed the sum of two *lacs* of rupees, besides the expenses.

Thus done, etc.

(*c*) *Saturday*, 26 *June*, 1756. *Afternoon, Extraordinary Meeting. All present.*

The court-messenger and broker having returned from the charge referred to in the resolution of this morning, with the statement that Facheruttezjaar on hearing of their message and seeing our rather indifferently[2] written request, had said that the Nawab, being already altogether dissatisfied with the arrangement they had come to, would surely give immediate orders to cut down our flagstaff, to fill up our moat and storm our fort; that the force required for the purpose was already called out and waited only for His Excellency's order, so that he could not appear before him with a request of such a nature, but would wash his hands of the business, leaving the issue to our responsibility, adding that to convince us of his disinterestedness he would willingly deduct ten thousand rupees from the fifty thousand

[1] Aliverdi Khan, grandfather and predecessor of Siraj-uddaula.

[2] Probably this means 'badly expressed.'

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

stipulated for; wherefore led by the motives stated in our previous resolution and considering that information has been received of movements on the part of our assailants that presage an early attack, and we have to deal with an enemy who, when it comes to the worst, will not be satisfied short of our complete ruin, it has been unanimously resolved to grant the Nawab the sum of four hundred thousand *sikka*[1] rupees, to wit, by written bond (on account of a dearth of cash) payable three months after date, as is shown in the bond prepared and adopted in the present meeting to the effect that:—

'We the undersigned, acting in the name and for the account of the Netherlands East India Company, do hereby promise to pay, three months after date, to the Nawab Mansur-ul-mulk, Siraj-uddaula, Shah Kuli Khan, Bahadur, Haibat Jang, or his order, the sum of four hundred thousand *sikka* rupees, for value received. At the Netherlands Chief Office, Hoogley, Fort Gustavus, the 26th June, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six. A. BISDOM, R. H. ARMENAULT, L. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. v. SCHEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, A. HOOREMAN and S. CROMBON.'

But first to forward the 10,000[2] *sikka* rupees in cash to Facher-udtezjaar, according to his request in order to satisfy the mediators. Further to urge the Prince to grant a *sanad*[3] or general order for the free and uninterrupted carrying on of the Company's commercial dealings everywhere, etc., and the confirmation of its privileges.

Done (etc.).

(*d*) *Sunday, 27 June,* 1756. *In the morning, Extraordinary Meeting. All present.*

The Director having informed the Council that the *gomasta* or factor of the Moorish merchant Choja Wazid had that morning brought back the bond for 400,000 *sikka* rupees, issued yesterday in favour of the Nawab, bringing with him at the same time the

[1] *Bearing the stamp of the King of Delhi.* Standard rupees.

[2] Should be 40,000, Coja Wazid having deducted the 10,000, which was his own share.

[3] A royal grant.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

factor of Fettusjen's heirs,[1] Beyenaat, with intelligence that His Excellency being in great want of money, it was his desire, if we could not supply him with cash, we should enter into negotiations with the said Beyenaat for an advance of the money. So, though such an arrangement will be more disadvantageous to the Company, as it will now also lose the interest, yet, there being no alternative if we do not wish to expose ourselves to difficulties or incur the Prince's displeasure, it was with one accord decided to conform to His Excellency's wishes, whereupon the aforesaid bond in the Nawab's favour was withdrawn and a bond in favour of Fettusjen's heirs at the ordinary interest at the rate of ¾ per cent. a month was granted, which read thus:

'We the undersigned acting on behalf of and for the account of the General Netherlands East India Company do hereby acknowledge having effected a loan of four hundred thousand *sikka* rupees with the bill-brokers Jagat Seth Fettusjentie and Seet Amendjendie,[2] which sum, together with the interest due thereon at the rate of 9 per cent. per annum, or ¾ per cent. a month, we promise to pay when the service of the East India Company shall allow of its being done. The Netherlands Chief-Office, Hoogley, Fort Gustavus, the 27th of June of the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six. A. BISDOM, R. H. ARMENAULT, L. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. VAN SCHEVICKHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, A. HOOREMAN, S. CROMBON.'

It was further agreed to withdraw the aforesaid bond in favour of the Nawab and to issue another promissory note in the name of Fettusjent's heirs, to enter note thereof, as thereupon was done.

The Director further stated that the Nawab had expressed a desire that he should wait upon His Excellency on the morrow in the afternoon to render due salutation, and the Worshipful Director also informed the members that he intended at the proper time to go and perform the said ceremony in company with the Head Administrator[3] after the custom of the country. But Mr. R. H. Armenault considering it not to be good policy in

[1] The Seth family, descendants of Fateh Chand.

[2] Probably means Seth Mahtab Rai and Seth Swarup Chand, grandsons of Jagat Seth.

[3] Apparently Mr. R. H. Armenault himself.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

these troublous times for the Chief and the Second both to repair [at the same time] outside the fort, requested the opinion of the Council on the subject, asserting, at the same time, his perfect readiness to go with the Director to observe the aforesaid custom of salutation, if it could not be otherwise. This objection having been discussed, and the circumstances of the time and the custom obtaining in the country being weighed, it was considered fit and proper that the salutation by the Worshipful Director and the Head Administrator should take place.

29. *Translation of a letter from the Dutch Council, Hugli, to M. Vernet, dated 27 June,* 1756.[1]

After the taking of Calcutta (now called Alinagar by him) the Nawab and his army being arrived the day before yesterday at Hoogley or at the Moorish fort, with the intention of keeping there the day after to-morrow the feast which follows the Moorish fast,[2] and afterwards proceeding on his march to Muxadabad,[3] his arrival caused us great uneasiness, on account of the uncertainty we felt as to what would become of us. All about our Settlement there was a heap of men of His Excellency's troops, and as the inhabitants had fled we found it necessary to repair to the fort. A *parwana* had been sent to the first undersigned by the Nawab even before he came here, whereby he warned us that in case we were unwilling to do what was about to be proposed to us by his friend the Moorish merchant Coja Wazid, it would be all up with our trade in Bengal. The upshot of this was that His Excellency claimed twenty *lacs* of rupees of us; at which exorbitant demand, being struck all of a heap and further considering that we should not be justified in at once agreeing without demur to the Nawab's demand, we engaged the aforesaid Coja Wazid to urge the Nawab on our behalf to concede a considerable reduction, in which we were so successful, that yesterday morning, after the Master of the Requests had already been to the Director to demand our flag and all our artillery and to have a Moorish banner hoisted, etc., we at length prevailed upon His Excellency to be satisfied with four *lacks sicca* rupees. Also a further 40,000 *sicca* rupees for

[1] Vernet Papers, the Hague. [2] The annual great fast of the Ramazan.
[3] The old name of Murshidabad.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

expenses, in which the customary *nazaŕani*, which is usually paid at Cossimbuzar on the election of a new Nawab, and the remainder under the name of contribution are included, [has been agreed upon], whereupon tranquillity has been restored, and in answer to an *arzi* presented by us we expect every moment a *sanad* from His Excellency for a free and unimpeded continuation of the Company's trade, etc., in every shape and form, whilst in the morning the two first undersigned are about to pay the Nawab a visit at his request, all of which we have thought it necessary to bring to your Honour's knowledge for your peace of mind, for which purpose only this is directed, we remaining &c. &c. A. BISDOM, R. H. ARMENAULT, L. ZUYDLAND, J. L. v. SCHEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, A. HOOREMAN and S. CROMBON.

30. *Dacca Consultations, 27 June,* 1756. *Present: Richard Becher, Esq., Messrs. Luke Scrafton, Thomas Hyndman, Samuel Waller.*

The Consultation of the 21st read, approved, and signed.—This day at noon our *vakeel* came from the *Durbar*[1] and acquainted us that the Nabob told him Surrajah Dowlat had taken and plundered the town of Calcutta and had also made himself master of Fort William, taken Mr. Holwell and some other gentlemen prisoners. That the Governor, Second and some few more having taken to the ships were endeavouring to make their escape down the river. That this intelligence came from the French. Our *vakeel* further acquainted us that Dusseraut Cawn our Nabob demanded that we should surrender ourselves immediately, which if we did not comply with, he would attack us, having everything in readiness. This account appears to us so improbable, that we apprehend it is put about in order to induce us to surrender. Agreed therefore that Mr. Scrafton write to Monsieur Courtin desiring him to acquaint us if he has received any certain advice of the taking of Fort William by Surrajah Dowlat.' In answer to which we received the melancholly confirmation of what our *vakeel* had told us, Monsieur Courtin assuring us that he had received the most certain advice of Fort William's being taken by the Nabob; That

[1] Court or Court officials.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

his letters were of the 19th, 20th, and 21st, from the Governor and Council of Chandernagore and several other gentlemen, that he was using his endeavors at the *Durbar* to save our lives and honor, he advises us to come to as speedy a resolution, telling us that bravery becomes temerity and imprudence when exerted *mal à propos*. Taking this affair into our most serious consideration, we are unanimously of opinion that there is no reason to doubt the truth of this news. Agreed therefore, that we write to Monsieur Courtin returning him our most sincere thanks for his kind designs in our favor and to desire he will permit Monsieur Fleurin to come to us, and let us know what terms can be procured for us in case we find we cannot avoid surrendering.

We now take into consideration the state of our factory, garrison, provisions &c. and from thence are to form a judgement whether we can render any material service to our Honourable Employers by attempting to defend ourselves.

As to the situation of our factory it stands in a large town surrounded with numbers of houses from which they might annoy us with cannon and small arms. The factory is little better than a common house surrounded with a thin brick wall one half of it not above nine foot high. Our garrison consists of a lieutenant, 4 serjeants, 3 corporals and 19 European soldiers besides 34 black Christians, and 60 *buxeries*.[1] As to the last we have little to expect from them, as they have almost all demanded leave to quit us. Our provisions may last three weeks or a month, but if we are attacked our ammunition will soon be expended, and our men exhausted with fatigue as we have so few they must be almost always on duty. Our factory is at the distance of near a quarter of a mile from the river. The passage by water to Calcutta from 14 to 20 days, that from Muxadavad to Dacca about four, from which place our enemies might receive reinforcements in 8 or 10 days. Notwithstanding the disadvantage of our situation, the smallness of our garrison &c. we were determined to defend ourselves to the utmost had we been attacked while Fort William continued in the hands of the English, and to enable us to do it we had planted what guns we had to the best advantage and with the assistance of the soldiers thrown up breast-works &c., and privately procured

[1] Gunmen.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

an additional quantity of powder. But since we are sure Fort William is taken, and that we cannot expect the least assistance or reinforcement from the gentlemen who are escaped in their ships, it does not appear to us that our attempting to defend ourselves can be of the least advantage to our Employers, and would rather be an act of rashness than bravery. Agreed therefore that we endeavor to procure the best terms possible by means of the French, and surrender our factory.

Observing numbers of armed men all around us, Ordered our garrison to keep under arms and a strict watch to prevent a surprize.

RICHARD BECHER, LUKE SCRAFTON, THOMAS HYNDMAN, SAMUEL WALLER.

31. *Dacca Consultations, 28 June, 1756, at six p.m. Present: Richard Becher, Esq., Chief, Messrs. Luke Scrafton, Thomas Hyndman, Samuel Waller.*

The Consultation of the 27th read, approved, and signed.

This morning Monsieur Fleurin, the French Second, came to our factory to acquaint us that he had been with Dusseraut Cawn our Nabob endeavouring to procure us the most favorable terms he could, but that all he was able to obtain, was, that the factory should be delivered up directly, the soldiers lay down their arms, and be carried prisoners to the Nabob, the ladies go out in pallanquins to the French factory, the pallanquins not to be searched on Monsieur Fleurin's giving his word that nothing should be in them but the cloaths the ladies had on. As to the Chief &c. Company's servants, the Nabob demanded that they should first be brought to him, and afterwards go to the French factory, Monsieur Courtin giving his parole to the Nabob that we shall wait the orders of Surrajah Dowlat in regard to our future fate. Taking these proposals into consideration, we think them very hard, but as Monsieur Fleurin assures us that very little alteration can be expected, Agreed that we beg Monsieur Fleurin to endeavour to save us the disgrace of going to the *Durbar*, and obtain permission that we go directly to the French, also that the soldiers may not be ill used. This he promises to endeavour to obtain and to return in the afternoon.

The 28th June in the afternoon Monsieur Fleurin returned and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

acquainted us he had obtained permission for the gentlemen to go to the French factory without going to the *Durbar*, and that the Nabob had promised the soldiers should not be ill used or put in irons. We then gave our paroles to the French Chief, gave up our military prisoners to the Nabob's people and are now with sorrowful hearts leaving our factory, being permitted to carry off nothing but the cloaths upon our backs, having still this satisfaction left, that we have to our utmost discharged our duty to our Honourable Employers.

RICHARD BECHER, LUKE SCRAFTON, THOMAS HYNDMAN, SAMUEL WALLER.

32. *Translation of the Secret Consultations of the Dutch Council, Hugli. Monday, 28 June, 1756. Forenoon, Extraordinary Meeting. All present.*[1]

The Director having shown us a letter received by him from the English Governor and some members of the Council, under date of 24th instant, Voltha, aboard the *Dodaly*, whither they had been compelled to retire with a few of the inhabitants on account of the taking of Calcutta by the Nawab, containing a request for assistance in the shape of provisions and clothing, also of anchors, cables and other cordage, as also that our officials at Voltha should be instructed to aid them with everything in their power, with a declaration of their readiness to pay the value of any article or articles thus supplied, so we have viewed with surprise the presumptuous recklessness of that nation in first bidding defiance to such a formidable enemy as the Nawab, and afterwards, after offering little or no resistance, in abandoning their permanent fortress and matchless colony without making any provision for the few things that were absolutely required. Having further weighed the request itself, so on one hand full consideration was given to the fact that we ought to lend a helping hand to all Christians in distress, especially the English, but on the other, duly weighing that the chief nation is not only the cause of her own ruin, but also of the heavy losses incurred by the other nations trading with this country, among which may surely be reckoned the costly ship *Voorburg*, which having stranded on the so-called Jannegat flats, might most probably have been saved, if

[1] Bengal Correspondence. The Hague.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the passage down the river had not been impeded by the army of the Nawab. And further how His Excellency, having, upon pain of his extreme indignation, stringently forbidden succouring in any way the fugitive English, the least violation of the said interdict, with which he would be sure to be made acquainted by his spies who are roving about everywhere, would be severely punished and, maybe, after the same method practised upon the English. It has, therefore, for the welfare of the service of the East India Company and for the safety of our people here, been deemed advisable to render the aforesaid fugitives no assistance in the present troublous times and to avoid all correspondence with them, and therefore not to reply to their aforesaid missives.

Done and resolved, Hoogley, at Fort Gustavus, on the above date A. BISDOM, R. H. ARMENAULT, L. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. VAN SCHEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, Secretaris, A. HOOREMAN and S. CROMBON.

33. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to the Captain of the French East India Company's ship in the Road of Balasore, dated 28 June, 1756.*[1]

We feel we ought to warn you of this event in order that you may be on your guard against any enterprise which these fugitives may attempt . . . out of their absolute necessity, which may force them to use violence to procure for themselves supplies of necessaries, not being able any longer to provide themselves with these from the country. It is said they are not very well furnished with provisions or munitions, having thought only of embarking their riches which are calculated at immense sums. . . . They have embarked many women and very few sailors. There is every reason to believe that they will find themselves reduced to very great misery before they get out of the Ganges. The extreme care we have to take in everything concerning the Nawab, who would not fail to seize the slightest pretext to do us some outrage, causes us to warn you to have no intercourse with these ships and to give them no assistance. This refusal may easily be excused by our fear of an approaching war and the precautions which that naturally makes us take. We shall send you our letters only when

[1] Pondicherry Records.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

you have passed these ships and are far enough to fear nothing more from them.

34. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to M. de la Bretesche at Patna, dated* 28 *June,* 1756.[1]

SIR,—This letter is merely to advise you that you need not be in any anxiety and that you can resume your operations and continue them as usual. We have accommodated matters with the Nawab who on his return from Calcutta has demanded contributions from all the [European] nations, in return for which he leaves them in peace.

The English of the Dacca Factory have been obliged to surrender and those of the Factory of Luckipur have embarked in three sloops with which they will, doubtless, go and join those who escaped from Calcutta.

35. *Letter from the Nawab to Council, Fort Saint George,* 30 *June,* 1756.[2]

36. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to the Council, Masulipatam, dated—June,* 1756.[3]

The ship *Silhouette* has entered the Ganges and yesterday was two short leagues from Calcutta, where she met the English vessels which were waiting a favourable wind to pass a fortress where batteries had been raised to stop them. Some English who came on board said we were at war with the Moors who intended to drive us out of their country as they had just done the English, who had been forced to abandon Calcutta and take refuge on their ships. This report prevented the captain of the *Silhouette* from venturing to come further without having orders from M. Renault who, immediately he heard from him, wrote to undeceive him and to instruct him how to behave until he has sent word to the Nawab and obtained an order for the people in the fort to let the ship pass without firing on her.

It is said the English [ships] passed to-day. They are nine in

[1] Pondicherry Records.
[2] See later, Fort Saint George Consultations, 17 August, 1756.
[3] Pondicherry Records.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

number besides many other craft by which they are probably accompanied.

37. *Narrative of the loss of Calcutta, with the Black Hole, by Captain Mills, who was in it, and sundry other particulars, being Captain Mills' pocket book, which he gave me, it is octavo, 16 pages, 7 June to 1 July, 1756.*[1]

Nabob Sur Rajah Dowlah 1756.

Page 1. June the 7th. We heard of Cassembizars being delivered up to the Nabob and Mr. Watts with the other gentlemen made prisoners.

On the 15th the French sent us word of the Nabob's army's march to Calcutta.

On the 17th the enemy attackt the redoubt at Perrins about noon. At 3 in the afternoon 40 men with 2 field pieces were sent to reinforce that place where in the engagement the Moors from behind the trees and bushes killed 2 of our men one of whome was Mr. Ralph Thoresby one of the Honourable Company's writers.

About 8 at night an 18-pounder gun was sent out to Perrins; and the 2 field pieces with the reinforcement that had been sent were ordered back to their former stations.

In the night Lieutenant Pacard who had the command at Perrins, sallied out with his party on the enemy, and having drove them from their posts, spiked up four of their guns, and brought away some of their ammunition.

Page 2. On the 18th of June about 9 in the morning our outworks were attacked by small partys in the skirts of the town, we dispatched several small partys to the tops of several of the highest houses near hand to annoy the enemy, and Monsieur Labonne with a party of militia and volunteers and two field pieces to guard the cross roads.

Amongst those small partys were killed Messrs. Charles Smith and Wilkinson. Monsieur Labonne, who retired to the Jail house with his party, bravely defended it for six hours, till himself and most of his party were wounded, were ordered to retire within the trenches at the Court house after having spiked up their guns, and brought off all the wounded.

[1] This document was given to Mr. Robert Orme. The original spelling has been preserved as far as possible.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The enemy finding the firing to desist took possession of the post, but in the retreat many of the *buckerys* deserted us and went over to the enemy. This afternoon we sent most of the European ladies on board the ships and several of the gentlemen deserted with them particular the Cornel and Lieutenant Mr. Manningham and Frankland, with several others.

Page 3. In the evening the enemy attacked us smartly, killing and wounding several of our men with their small arms, they endeavoured to surround us. Were ordered to retreat from the outworks, after having spiked up our guns, and take possestion of the church, Mr. Cruttenden's, Aires's, and the Company's houses which we quietly keept all that night.

The morning of the 19th the enemy advanced to us, and attacked us vigorously on all sides, having got into Mr. Aires's compound and outhouses, several volleys of small arms were fired by those that keept that post and as readyly returned, but they having made a hole through the east end of the church, and fireing their cannon through at the same time, which killed two men, were ordered to retire from the outworks into the garrison, upon which Lieutenant Blagg sett fire to Mr. Cruttenden's house and retired to the garrison. This morning sent the remainder of the European women with all the wounded on board the shiping.

Page 4. 19th. About 10 the Governour, Messrs. Maggott, one of our Captains, the Commandant Minchin, Captain Grant, Messrs. Cruttenden, Mapletoft, Sumner, Billers, Rider, Tooke, Senior, Ellis, Vossmer, Charlton, Leycester, Dr. Fullerton, Lieutenants Oharo, Whitherburn, Messrs. Heugh Baillie, Edward Ridge, attorney, Robert Bolderick, supercargo, Henry Summers, Elves, Lange, Smith, Whaley, Lyng, the fidler, Whatmore, Thomas Barnard, Abraham Jacobs, Francis Child, Robert Carr

Page 5. fledd on board the ships, and weighed their anchors, and dropt down the river takeing with them all the boats, sloops and vessels. Being cutt off from a retreat, and the principle officers deserting with so many along with them greatly dispirited the people in the garrison.

Upon which Mr. Holwell was at the Governor's absconding, made General and Governor of Calcutta, Mr. Pearks who was senior in Councill, giving it up to Mr. Holwell for the time being, Mr. Holwell

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

expressing his hearty intentions to defend the Fort till the last extremity, and made a publick declaration upon the bastions of his detesting Mr. Drake's flight, at the same time encourageing the military to stand to their arms and hold out the seige with a promise of 3 chests of the Honourable Company's treasure, containing 24,000 rupees, amongst them if they would keep the place.

But for want of a sufficient number of officers, so many having left the place,

Page 6. the Dutch soldiers could not he hindered from breaking into the rooms of the officers that had absconded, the military and gunroom[1] mostly consisting of that country, and takeing from thence what wine and spirites they could lay their hands on, by which means they began to be mutinous and unruly. In the night a corporeal and several private men, most of them Dutch, deserted us by droping over the walls and going to the enemy.

We remained fireing as opportunity required; in the meanwhile the enemy continued plundering the town, and burning the houses in sundry places.

Next morning on the 20th the enemy gott possestion of the top of the church and houses round about the garrison which being loftier then the walls, and commanding all the bastions and galled us so that no man could stand them (for their small arms) they killing or wounding all that appeared in sight, amongst whome was Lieutenant Smith, Captain Pickering,

Page 7. and wounding most of our officers, Ajudent Talbot who after dyed of his wound &c.

The surviving officers were obliged to exert themselves pistol in hand to keep the soldiers to their quarters. At noon the Govournor and Company thought it proper to write to the Nabob and *duan* demanding a truce, but he disdainfully threw it away and would not give us an answer.

The Honourable Company's ship *Prince George* which had hitherto layn before Perrin's Gardens was ordered down abrest of the fort, but in the way unfortunately by the bad conduct of the pilot, Francis Morris, a Dutchman, ran ashore and some time after was taken by the enemy, the Captain and his officers who gott up to Chincera after seeing the fort taken was by the Dutch delivered up to the Moors in three hours after their arrival.

[1] The artillerymen.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

About 4 of clock in the afternoon the enemy called out to us not to fireing

Page 8. in consequence to which the Govournor shewed a flagg of truce, and gave orders for the garrison not to fire. Upon which the enemy in vast numbers came under our walls, and at once began to sett fire to the windows and gates of the fort which were stopt up with bales of cotton and cloath, and began to break open the fort gate, scaleing our walls on all sides.

This put us in the utmost confution, some opening the back gate and running into the river, others to take possestion of a boat that lay ashore half afloat and half dry was so full in an instant that she could not be gott off. In the meanwhile the Moors surrounding us on all sides, and shewing signs of quarters to all the people in the water, they went on shore and delivered themselves up to the Moors, some of them went to the Nabob and where by him pardoned, others in the confution gott into a *budgerow*, while the enemy

Page 9. was plundering, and escaped down on board the ships at that time lying little below Surmons Gardens.

But most of those that remained in the fort where put into the Black Hole, to the number of 144 men, women, and children.

Off whome upwards of 120 where miserably smuthered by the heat occationed by so many being shut up in so small a place, as to be obliged to stand upon one another.

Amongst those that unhappily suffered were Messrs. Eyres, Bailie Senior, Coales, Dumbleton, Jewkes, Revely, Law, Jebb, Carse, Vallicourt, Bellimy Senior and Junior (Thomas shott himself on the wall), Drake, Byng, Dalrymple, Patrick Johnstone, Street, Stephen and Edward Pages's, Grubb, Dodd, Torrians, Knapton, Ballard, Captain Clayton, Buchanan, Whitherington, Lieutenants Simson, Hays, Blagg, Bishop, Paccard, Ensign Scott, Wedderborn, James Guy, carpenter, Captain Hunt,

Page 10. Robert Carey, Thomas Leach, the 2 Stopfords, Porter, Hylierd, Cocker, Carce.

Page 11. Amongst those that had escaped death in the Black Hole and came out alive were John Holwell, Esq., Governour, Court, Burdett, Walcott Ensign, who were taken away by the Nabob's party and put into irons both legs. Messrs. Cook, Lushington gott down on board the ships, the rest remaining is

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Mr. Mills
Mr. Dixon
Patrick Moran
Thomas Meadows
John Angell
John Burgaft
John Arnd
John Jones
Philip Cosall
Peter Thomas
John Gatliff
John Boirs
Barnard Clelling
Richard Aillery
} all that escaped the terrible dungeon.

Page 12. At the time the Fort was taken, there was escaped the two Doctors Noxes, Doctor Gray, Paul Richard Pearks Esq., Dr. Taylor, Dr. English, Captain Collins, Captain Lewis, James Andrews, George Gray Junior, George Alsop, Edward Savage, James Johnstone, William Tedcomb, Thomas Henderson, Thomas Hirwood.

Page 13. Having no men on the bastions, but two or three centinels, the greatest part of the soldiers for wont of provitions and having plenty of drink could not be prevailed on to mount the bastions any more.

Those that were otherwise, were excessively fatigued, having been on duty ever since the first of the siege.

The garrison being so reduced for wont of relief, was most untimely overcome with plenty of ammunition at hand.

Page 14. An account of the powder at the Fort with other amunition :

Europe barrels	37	
Do. ½ do.	13	
Bombay do.	187	
Bengall do.	159	
		396

Powder of Captain Whitheringtons

Bengall	45	
Do. Barrels	50	
		95

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Do. of the *Success* Galleys		
Barrels	5	
Do. Carr	9	
	—	14
747 Maund 30 Seer		

This is except the powder belonging to the vessels and merchants.

Page 15. An Account of the iron round shott large and small . 40760

Do. of ready shells large and small

	Ins.		
Do. of ready filled	10½	50	
	4½	36	
	3½	300	
Hand Granades		500	
		—	886
Large empty shells	13½	150	
	10½	150	
	8	50	
		—	350
Small shells empty			6200
Grape shott			
18 lb.		50	
12		28	
9		250	
6		600	
4		150	
3		300	
2		250	
1		80	
		—	2293

Page 16. On the 1st of July was ordered out of Calcutta.

38. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Chandernagore, 2 July,* 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—It is with the utmost concern we now inform you that Fort William was taken by the Moors the 20th ultimo; the rise of these troubles are as follows.

The Nabob under various pretences sent a guard upon our factory at Cossimbuzar to stop our business, as is customary in this country when they have any demand on the Europeans, and dayly increased the force till the factory was surrounded by his

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

whole army which by the most moderate computation consisted of 10,000 Horse 20,000 Ragepout gunmen and a large train of artillery and then demanded Mr. Watts to go out and see him; the Nabob's *duan*[1] who commanded the van of the army writing Mr. Watts a letter that he might go out with great safety, that no harm should happen and that he would introduce him to the Nabob; upon this we thought proper to send the surgeon of the factory to the *duan* and he gave him the same assurances: and sent him back with a considerable person and a present of *beetle* (which is esteemed a pledge of faith) to accompany the Chief to the Nabob. Accordingly agreeable to the unanimous opinion of the gentlemen of the factory and officers of the garrison the Chief went and was introduced to the Nabob who immediately ordered him into confinement and insisted on his giving an obligation that in fifteen days time the gentlemen of Calcutta should level what new works they had raised, deliver up the Nabob's tenants who had fled for protection there, and that if it could be proved that we had falsified the Company's *dusticks* by giving them to those who had no right to them we should pay back what the Government had suffered by loss of duties. The Chief being in their hands was obliged to sign this, they then told him that his signing was of no consequence without the rest of the Council. Accordingly upon the surgeon's returning to the factory and acquainting Messrs. Collet and Batson that it was necessary they should go to the Chief in order to make an end of the affair, they went and were detained prisoners, nothing more being said about the obligation the Chief had signed (the Chief solemnly asserts that he told the surgeon to let Messrs. Collet and Batson know he did not think it adviseable for them to quit the factory). The next day we were ordered to deliver up our cannon and amunition which we complyed with in hopes entirely to pacify the Nabob. The army then drew off from the factory. Mr. Batson was sent back to the factory and Messrs. Watts and Collet kept prisoners in the camp which then bent its march towards Calcutta. We have since heard all the *godowns* at Cossimbuzar were sealed up with the Nabob's seal and the soldiers remaining in the factory carried prisoners to Muxadabad.

As the Chief's going out of the Factory may perhaps appear

[1] Raja Rai Durlabh.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

extraordinary we think it necessary to give our reasons for taking such a step. It has been always customary in Bengall for the Chiefs of the Subordinates[1] to visit the Nabobs of the province and we had great reason to believe that on paying this visit we should be able to accommodate matters and prevent his march to Calcutta. If we had refused our factory must have inevitably fallen into their hands with all the Company's effects outstanding in Bengall, our garrison being in no condition to make a defence against so large a force, our factory being surrounded on three sides by houses which overlooked our bastians and some not thirty yards from the bastian; most of our guns were honey-combed and carriages rotten though we had repeatedly indented to Calcutta for new ones. Our garrison consisted of about 50 soldiers most of which were black Portegueze. We had about 80 *maunds* of powder but few or no shot or granades. We might possibly with this force have held out 3 or 4 days, which would not have prevented the consequences that have since happened and we undoubtedly should have been blamed for having commenced a war with the Goverment and we are very sensible had the gentlemen of Calcutta thought proper to treat, affairs might have been accommodated even when the Nabob was on his march.

We can give no certain account how Calcutta was taken, we being then prisoners in the camp, but we have since heard the Governour, Commandant, and several other gentlemen of the Council with part of the garrison quitted the fort and retired on board their ships which flung the rest into panick and confusion, which occasioned the fort to be surrendered to the Moors. We hear Mr. Holwell was taken prisoner in the fort and is in irons. We have no certain news of the fate of the other Subordinates but it is reported they are plundered—most of the Company's servants that remained when the Governour &c went away were either killed or have since died by ill usage.

We shall address your Honour &c. again when we can do it with more certainty.

We were released about four days ago and agreable to our desire were delivered to the care of the French [Director] who has the Nabob's orders to send us safe to Madrass, enclosed is a copy of a

[1] Subordinate factories or settlements up-country.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

letter from the Nabob to the Director of Chandernagore as also one to the Governour of Fort Saint George. The civilitys that we and all the English have received from this Settlement requires the greatest acknowledgments. Lest any false reports should reach your Honour &c., we can assure you that to the best of our knowledge the French have given no assistance to the Country Goverment but have suffered greatly themselves having been obliged to pay 400,000 rupees and the Dutch as much or more.

We beg the favour of your Honour &c. to represent to our Honourable Masters our distresed situation by the first conveyance, and we hope from their candour that the part we have acted will not be disapproved of as we are conscious to ourselves that had the Governour and Council made any proposals to the Goverment affairs might have been accommodated, Fort William subsisted, and their effects at the Subordinates and the *aurungs* safe, but by all accounts they were as averse to any terms of peace as they [were] incapable of war.

We are, &c., &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

39. *Translation of an extract from a letter written from Chandernagore, dated 3 July, 1756, concerning the consequences of the capture of Calcutta.*[1]

We have here to perform the same duties to several of the English —amongst others Messrs Watts and Collet—as those you have acquitted yourselves of at Dacca. These two last arrived here on the 28th evening in palanquins, but otherwise in very bad condition, though a few days after their capture the Nawab had given orders to treat them a little better. He[2] was constantly subjected to all kinds of indignities, and he was hardly allowed to keep a part of his clothes and linen. When he passed near Chinsura following the Nawab in his expedition to Calcutta he sent to ask for some assistance from Mr. Bisdom who, besides some refreshments, sent him a thousand rupees. In order to get this gift from the hands of the leeches who guarded him he was obliged to make terms with them and to sacrifice more than 600

[1] Fort Saint George, Select Committee Consultations, 9 November, 1756.

[2] Probably refers to Mr. Watts.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

rupees of the 1,000 to save the rest. Finally he was released; the Nawab even recommended him to M. Renault with instructions to send him to the [Madras] Coast. It is further said that to repair the evil he has done him he has promised to write in his favour to the Council of Madras when informing them of the insolent behaviour of the English and Mr. Drake, which had compelled him to proceed to extremities against them and drive them out of Bengal. I doubt whether this patronage will benefit Mr. Watts very much, though at bottom he is much less culpable than Mr. Drake. One can at the most reproach him only with feebleness and imprudence whereas the latter is also guilty of cowardice and knavery and of the most dreadful treason a man can commit, having with the Commandant of the troops and the greater part of the Council preferred their safety and that of their wealth to the safety of a number of women, of honest people, and of a crowd of Christian persons. We now know the details of all that passed in this sad occurrence, and the secret springs of this affair, which one can only regard as a *Mystery of Iniquity*. It is no longer a matter of doubt from the way in which Mr. Drake behaved that he had formed a [definite] plan with the Commandant of the troops and certain Councillors, and that they had all agreed that these troubles offered an excellent opportunity to appropriate a portion of the wealth confided to their care. It was with this view that Mr. Drake instead of arranging the matter with the Nawab strove only to force him to extremities by the most insolent replies. He would doubtless have been much disgusted if things had not come to this pass, but it is more surprising that having in view the destruction of his Settlement and his own retreat on board the ships he did not take better precautions to secure this latter, and that he did not put on board the ships water or provisions or sailors or even ballast, thinking of nothing but the money, as if at sea money served instead of everything else. It is said indeed that they are in want of everything, and that the Councillors live like common sailors (*au cabestan*).

Before we knew everything that had happened in the fort, we did not understand how the Moors got possession of it, and by what enchantment the heads of the English had been turned to such an extent. The measures of Mr. Drake were so well taken that he left in the factory three Councillors who were the most opposed

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

to him, *viz.* Messrs Holwell, Eyre and Baillie. He chose for making this fine *coup* the moment of a sortie which he ordered. Whilst he was embarking, a crowd of soldiers and common people threw themselves pell mell into the water and into the boats to get to the ships, in which very few succeeded. Several boats were sunk before reaching them. Those who were eye witnesses of this confusion counted the number they saw drowned at more than 200 people.

After this retreat which occasioned a great mutiny, and during which some shots were fired at Mr. Drake, consternation fell upon those who remained. The soldiers of the detachment who came back from the sortie, finding neither Governor nor Commandant present, mutinied, broke into the wine *godowns* and filled themselves with wine. The few who were capable of resisting and [were ashamed] to give way to despair in this manner made a brave stand until—it must have been—Sunday, when, seeing the disorder continue, they thought proper to surrender. The moment when the Moors seized the fort was like that of the retreat, many persons were drowned whilst trying to take refuge on board the ships. The two first days passed in licence and all the disorders of a place taken by assault, with the exception of massacre to which the Moors are not accustomed in regard to people disarmed. About 160 Europeans who were taken in the fort were shut up in a chamber so small that they could only stand upright with their arms raised. The first night 132 died in it suffocated by the heat. Mr. Eyre, Councillor, whom perhaps you knew, suffered the same fate the next day. An Englishman who survived this Hell reports an action of Mr. Eyre which shows what they had to suffer. He says that as he was very fat and corpulent he could think of no other relief, but to take off his cotton drawers, which, as was the case with the rest, were his only clothing,—to take it off, I say, soaked with perspiration, to wring it and press what came from it into his mouth to slake his thirst. It is not surprising that he did not hold out. Mr. Baillie the other Councillor was killed, but Mr. Holwell is without doubt the most to be pitied. As it was he who was *Zemindar*[1] of Calcutta, the Moors had long owed him a grudge. Consequently they beat him almost every day, and we expect to hear at any moment that he has succumbed to this

[1] Magistrate.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

torture. When the Nawab entered the fort of Calcutta he could not get over his surprise at seeing such a prodigious heap of cannon, cannon balls and other munitions—of the first indeed there were more than 500, some mounted [and some without carriages]. He was struck with the beauty of the Government House, and considered it worthy to be the dwelling of Princes rather than merchants. Seeing the fire in many parts [of the town] and considering the great number of fine houses, he could not help saying of the English that they must have been mad to oblige him to drive them from so large a town. He immediately ordered the Government House to be destroyed out of hatred of Mr. Drake, whose private property he thought it was, but the others were preserved and the fire extinguished. He even went to live in the fine house belonging to Mr. Wedderburn, and after a time published an order to all Christians and *Gentiles*[1] to come back and live in their houses within 3 days under penalty of losing them. Some have obeyed and he has done them no harm. The majority were afraid and remained in our Settlement. They had good reason not to accept this invitation as during the last few days the Nawab has changed his mind, on what pretext is unknown, and has sent 2,000 pioneers to destroy and raze the whole Settlement, not wishing as he says to leave one stone on another. Indeed the *Faujdar* passed yesterday evening to go and hasten the work by his presence. At first it was said here that this was in revenge for disorders committed by the English at the mouth of the river where they were burning and plundering all the villages, but we have since learned that this news is false, as is also that of the arrival of two of their ships of war, which every day are reported to have arrived and which disappear the next day.

By my last letter I had the honour to inform you, I think, that the English were still with their ships a little below Calcutta, that after having abandoned 5 ships under the fort, and lost one on a bank, they were much embarrassed how to pass Makwa Tanna (Tanner's Fort) where the Moors had built batteries. They have since passed this passage very easily, but at that of Budge Budge where they were waited for with many *cayetoques*[2] they lost two

[1] Hindus.

[2] Possibly country boats, which often carry a cabin. German *kajüte*—cabin. A little below it seems as if a kind of gun was referred to.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of their ships which ran aground and broke up immediately. Luckily the Moors saved all the people, of whom there were a considerable number especially of women, amongst whom was the niece of Mr. Finely (?). No harm was done to any one but the *gemidar* of the place refused to release them except on condition that they gave him 25 rupees a head. We heard later that the English had ransomed them and that they had rejoined the ships. The Moors found on these ships a great quantity of silver plate, in particular that of the Company, and 20 boxes of silver. Our vessel *Le Silhouet* knowing nothing of the war with the English was much surprised when passing before Makwa Tanna to find herself fired upon several times with *cayetoques* (?). The force of the tide prevented her from anchoring there. She cast anchor above that fort. The English, who at that time had not yet passed, came on board, at least some who knew M. Chambon; they told him what had happened, and could not help confessing they were covered with shame at the cowardice with which they had fled; but at the same time they tried to persuade the Captain to reply to the Moors in case they fired on him again. They declared to him that we also were engaged in this business and that the Nawab intended to drive us out of Chandernagore. It is not difficult to discover the object of such a false report. M. Chambon before determining sent a message to M. Renault, who sent him orders to be careful not to give the least offence to the Moors. As a matter of fact he was obliged during the night to send some refreshments which the English begged of him. After the destruction of Calcutta, we, like the Dutch, have had our turn for fear. Not in truth as much as the English, but not far off. Almost the whole army of the Nawab has marched through our Settlement, insulting every one in the streets, committing a thousand acts of violence, taking away the servants and bearers to carry their booty, cruelly beating the people belonging to the port to give them boats. In short what shall I say? Things were twenty times on the point of coming to extremities. To finish with us, the Nawab coming to Hugli on the 25th demanded contributions from the two nations. The Dutch have paid him four *lakhs* and a half, and we, in spite of the general disgust of every one, Company's servants and private people, soldiers and sailors, in spite

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of our number of 300 whites, and our desire to avenge the honour of the European name, we have submitted to pay, it is said, three *lakhs*. One must believe that their fear for the smaller factories has had no little share in determining the gentlemen of the Council, who, their knowledge being greater than that of us young people, are better qualified to judge of the advantages and disadvantages of resistance. In regard to the factory I do not think there was the least fear, and it was easy to see by the ardour shown by every one how safe it was, but it is not the less true that, not to speak of the smaller [up-country] factories, it would not have been easy to defend the Settlement [i.e. the town of Chandernagore] the destruction of which would have ruined all the merchants, &c. The captains of the ships which ran ashore at Budge Budge arrived here yesterday. They were followed by a number of other people of all classes whom the Nawab allows us to receive. He has even said he will send us all whom he captures, so we expect soon to see those of Dacca.

40. *Translation of a letter from the Dutch Council, Hugli, to the Supreme Council, Batavia, dated Fort Gustavus,* 5 *July,* 1756.[1]

HIGH AND WELL-BORN SIRS,—We shall have the honour of answering your respected and honoured public general letter dated the 13th April last, received by the ships *Vosmar* and *Voorburg*, on the next occasion, leaving this matter to the chief officers in order to communicate an event which was as unexpected as unfortunate for the European nations trading here.

The Nawab Aliverdi Khan having died in April of this year, and his grandson Siraj-uddaula being called to the helm of affairs, the English at Calcutta caused ramparts of a certain kind of stone to be erected. With the knowledge of the *Nawab-Subah* (?) or under-Nawab of Dacca, and without paying any attention to the prohibitions and notices issued by the young Prince concerning these matters, they gave protection to one Kissendas, who thought he could escape from the Nawab.

His Excellency, being thus defied, occupied the English fort of Cossimbazar not before the beginning of June. This being surrendered by the Chief and his Council without any fighting or

[1] State Archives, the Hague.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

resistance His Excellency, taking our English friends of Cossimbazar as prisoners with him, marched by forced marches straight on Calcutta, at the head of an army of 60 or 70 thousand men.

The whole world thought and expected that he would have knocked his head against such a strong place, but time has shewn that the English defended themselves for three days only. A part of them fled in their ships down the river, and the rest, who did not perish by the sword, have fallen into the Nawab's hands, and are bound in irons. There now is that beautiful place, whose blooming and flourishing condition caused every one to admire it, and from which the English Company drew a great and princely income. The fort and all the other costly buildings have been pulled down, the shops erected before this disaster have been plundered, and the timber wharfs destroyed, the place re-named Alinagar, and put under the government of a *Faujdar*. The officers of the up-country factories are also prisoners in consequence of the self-willed behaviour which is peculiar to this nation.

Had it even remained at this, which God prevent, we should have had to share in the trouble which the above-mentioned nation had drawn upon its own neck, because, having been repeatedly written to by the Prince for assistance in soldiers, ammunition and boats, he on our absolute refusal, immediately after the taking of Calcutta, surrounded us with immensely superior forces, and demanded a contribution of 20 *lakhs* or 2,000,000 rupees, a claim which we could not satisfy and would sooner have trusted ourselves to die fighting. In the meantime Heaven shewed us a way out of the difficulty so that we, by the expenditure of certain money, brought influence to bear upon that mad Prince, so as to incline him in our favour. By this means we obtained a modification to one fifth of the whole, or four *lakhs* of rupees. Having gained ground thus far we imagined that some more might be abated, or that in the matter of the *nazarani*, which one is ordinarily obliged to pay to all new Viceroys, we might get off with about half a *lakh* instead of one or two *lakhs*, but the Prince, seeing our secret joy and flattering himself that he had a right to chastise us, commanded the people with him to forcibly take away our artillery and trample our flag under foot. Now there was no further time for delay, we must either pay or take

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the consequences. On the one hand it was hard that the Company should have to pay such an immense sum of money, which, including that spent upon the cost of intercession and some bribes spent upon persuading the Nawab and his army to retire from Calcutta, was to be estimated at 400,000 rupees, and on the other hand there was no chance in the world to hold out against the immense force of the Nawab, who was provided with a considerable force of artillery and a good European constabulary[1] (*sic*), nor was it possible in the present difficulty to flee on our ships. (The fugitive English were still struggling to exist in the neighbourhood of Fulta, not without danger of once again falling into the hands of the Moors.) Although, by God's blessing, our unpardonable stupidity might possibly have been made good, still it appeared an inconsiderate bravery to risk our lives, our liberty, the reputation of our nationality and our colony, by holding out for a day or two, or possibly less considering the weakness of our fort and the bad condition of our artillery as compared with that of the English. Consequently, *nolens volens* we decided to concede the demands of the Nawab, the extorted money being advanced by the *gumasta* of Fettusjent on a bond of ¾ per cent. per month. Thereupon the first and second undersigned were received at his *Darbar* in a very friendly way and were presented with robes of honour, and a head-dress set with precious stones, together with an elephant and a horse, and were verbally assured by His Excellency that he would see to the necessary *parwanas* for the confirmation of the Company's privileges on his arrival at Murshidabad.

Besides the above mentioned damage the Company apparently still stands to suffer a further loss of from 25 to 26 thousand rupees through the D'Eccaas [? Dacca] merchant Saktiram, who had been a servant of the English and, according to all appearances, was fond of them; so that the misfortune of the English is in reality to be deplored, for although the English Company has for the present been deprived of a great share of commerce, still the opposite would be desirable for us, seeing that as far as they are concerned the passage from here to the sea is usually kept open, whereas now our ships will always be held up at Calcutta and

[1] Probably the French deserters or mercenaries who served him as artillerymen.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Muckwa Tana, which the Moors have since strongly fortified, and will be prevented from departing punctually, without calculating the evil consequences which we shall have to sustain if the English make reprisals upon the Nawab and force us to attack him upon the water. The French have had to pay a contribution proportionate to ours, to the amount of 3 *lakhs* of rupees besides another half *lakh* for mediation money. One does not yet know whether the other nations will get out of this difficulty now without tearing their clothes, but it is known that the Empdeners had about two and a half *lakhs* of rupees outstanding amongst the English, and that to all appearances they will never see a doit of this money again, so that this Company may very possibly be ruined, especially if any disasters take place, such as, alas! are hitting our Company more than too frequently, seeing that in the beginning of this month the ship *Voorburg*, whilst sailing up the Ganges, got aground on the shallow of the so-called Jannegat [John's or Jack's Hole] and was lost with all its cargo except the silver, which according to custom had been carried in the sloop. Possibly we might have been able to save a considerable quantity of the cargo if we had been able to get there in time, but we could do nothing towards this owing to the passage being closed by the departure of the Nawab three days ago.[1]

The English as well as the Nawab have sought our alliance, and on our persevering in an absolute neutrality, the English Council has protested against us in the name of His Britannic Majesty, as your Excellencies will come to see by the letters to be despatched by the first ship next September.

For the rest we request your Excellencies to kindly take into favourable consideration the above written statement, and to confirm the measures we have determined upon with the usual honoured approbation.

Meanwhile we remain, &c. &c., A. BISDOM, &c. &c.

41. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Chandernagore, 6 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—Enclosed comes duplicate of our letter of the 3rd instant since which we are informed that the

[1] That is, they could not get permission from him to pass Calcutta and Muckwa Tana forts quickly enough.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Dacca factory was surrounded and the gentlemen obliged to surrender, that the French Chief has received them into their factory till he has the Nabob's order concerning them, that Mr. Amyatt has made his escape from Luckipore with effects of the Company's to the amount of about 60,000 rupees, Mr. Boddam from Ballasore likewise with about 5 or 6,000 rupees.

We have been obliged to borrow money of the French Company for our subsistence as we have lost everything we had in Bengall, *viz.*, Mr. Watts 2,000 for him and his family and Mr. Collet 500 rupees, for which we have given receipts. As these notes will be tendered to your Honour &c. from Pondicherry for payment, we beg the favour of your Honour &c. to honour them, and in case the Company do not think proper to make us any allowance we shall with pleasure repay the sum advanced. Enclosed is a list of what gentlemen are on board of the English ships in the river.

We are, &c., &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

42. *Letter from Council at Fulta to Messrs. Watts and Collet. Dated on board the Ship 'Doddaley' off Fulta, 6 July,* 1756.

GENTLEMEN,—We congratulate your safety at Chandernagore. In our situation we are to expect from you who have been so long in the Nabob's camp the most certain account you are able to transmit us of the Nabob's determination respecting the English Company, and what effect you imagine an application to his principal ministers and great men would have in our favour, for which purpose we should be glad you would let us know who would be the properest persons to address to. We are advised that Monickchund, Roy Doolob, Golam Hassein Cawn and Coja Wazeed are those who have the greatest influence, and in consequence of that information we forward you enclosed letters for those officers, and desire you will endeavour to have an exact translate of them made into the Persian language and get them delivered with the original. If you think it would be proper to apply to any other *Durbar* officers upon this occasion, we request you will point out the persons, or (if you judge it will answer the end) we should be glad you would address them yourselves in behalf of our Honourable Employers to interest them in our favours. In hopes of opening a correspon-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

dence with the Government, we have absolutely forbid any hostilities being committed on any Moors' ships or vessels which may arrive in the river, or giving any offence to the country people round about us, by which pacifick measures on our side, we hope for a favourable turn of affairs.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, W. MACKETT, P. AMYATT, T. BODDAM.

43. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Chandernagore, 7 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—Since our last we have received a letter from the gentlemen on board of the ships at Fulta, copy of which we inclose as also copy of a letter they desire to be translated into Persian and sent to the several great men about the Nabob for permission to reestablish the Settlement.

We must beg leave to observe to your Honour &c. that we wrote[1] to the Governour and Council of Calcutta when we were at Houghley (which was the first opportunity we had) that if they would send a proper person or empower us we flattered ourselves that we should be able even then to accommodate matters for a sum of money. We are not certain but are informed that that letter was received and an answer wrote importing that after the affront the Nabob had given of sealing up the Company's effects and confining their servants at Cossimbuzar they could not think of coming to any terms of accommodation. We are informed likewise by Cossenaut one of the Company's *banyans*[2] that Ommichund and some of the principal merchants offered to contribute considerably towards making up affairs. Coja Wazeed, the greatest merchant in Bengall, who resides at Houghley and has great influence with the Nabob, his *duan* told us that he went four times to Calcutta in order to persuade the gentlemen to make up matters with the Nabob but was threatened to be ill used if he came again on the same errand.

We shall do all in our power to get permission to reestablish the Settlement but are without any hopes of obtaining it during the life of the present Nabob. We therefore know of no other

[1] Apparently missing.

[2] Native brokers.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

method but that of a military force which we hope your Honour &c. will be able to send sufficient to attack the Nabob even in his Metropolis, as we hear a peace is confirmed with France.

There are 79 of our serjeants, soldiers and others in the hospital here who escaped from Calcutta and are provided with provisions and cloaths by the French Governour and Council, who have been extremely humane to us all and now mantain by charity near 3,000 poor Portuguese men, women and children who were inhabitants of Calcutta.

We are, &c., &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

44. *Letter from Council at Fulta to Coja Wajid and other native personages.*

SIR,—Relying on your favour and friendship for the English nation, we take the liberty of addressing this letter to you and intreat the honour of your aid and assistance in our present situation. We hope by your means to be informed in what manner we may address the Nabob for his permission to reestablish our Settlement at Calcutta.

To whom can we apply in our present circumstances but to those from whom we have received many marks of favour and protection and on whom we still depend.

Having no *Munsee*[1] with us, we are obliged to address you in English, and hope, Sir, you will for that reason excuse any defect in our stile or omission of the due forms of respect. What can we say more? but that we hope much from your aid and favourable representation of the English to the Nabob.

We are &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, CHARLES MANNINGHAM, WILLIAM FRANKLAND, WILLIAM MACKETT, P. AMYATT, THOMAS BODDAM.

45. *Translation of a letter from M. Vernet to M. La Tour, dated 7 July*, 1756.[2]

The Nawab in accordance with our letter of the 10th ultimo having left for Calcutta and arrived there on the evening of the 15th, has met with the same success as here; for after a

[1] Teacher or interpreter.

[2] Vernet Papers, the Hague.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

5 days' investment he took the same, but, according to the testimony of everyone, not by his tactful management or bravery, but rather owing to the ill-behaviour of Governor Drake, who taking a good 200 picked soldiers with him, left the fort, on pretext of attacking the enemy, but far from doing so, he embarked with those men, accompanied by the Commandants[1] Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, after putting considerable treasure and all the women on board a few days before, and dropped down the river, leaving to the fury of the Nawab a number of brave men, among whom, when the fort was taken, a great carnage was wrought, but soon after put a stop to by the Prince.

Since your Honour's letters of the 16th of May we have received no further news from your Honour, of which we have thought it advisable to inform you, that you may be guided accordingly.[2]

For the rest we remain with kind greetings.

46. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council at Fulta, dated Chandernagore, 8 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—We have received your favour of the 6th instant from on board the *Daddalay* off Fultah and are obliged to you for your congratulations for our safety. As we were prisoners all the time of our stay in the camp, it was little we could learn of the Nabob's intentions concerning the English, only we heard from all quarters that he was greatly irritated against your Honour &c. particularly the Governour, against whom since the taking of the place his expressions have been very harsh, and he has threatened both French and Dutch with extirpation if they assist you with any provisions. Therefore we are without any hopes that an application to the great men will have any effect at present, though had your Honour &c. thought proper to treat before the Nabob reached Calcutta we are pretty certain a sum of money would have made all easy, prevented the loss of the Settlement and the ruin of many thousands, and we wrote to

[1] Should be 'by the Commandant, Captain Minchin and Messrs. Manningham and Frankland.' The two latter gentlemen were Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel of the Militia.

[2] Apparently refers to the uncertainty of the messengers passing safely between the European factories, which is more openly mentioned in other letters.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

your Honour &c. to that purpose when we were off Houghley, the only opportunity we had while in the camp, and are informed the letter came to hand: and a proof that the Nabob's intent was to accommodate matters, was that he touched none of the Company's effects at Cossimbuzar except the warlike stores. Should the Nabob think fit to permit the English to return and resettle we are afraid it would be not only with the loss of all their priviledges but on such shameful terms that Englishmen we hope will never consent to. And we likewise think that after your Honour and the majority of you had quitted Fort William, which still held out, your power as a Governour and Councill from that moment ceased and we are of opinion that you have no authority to indemnify us for acting by your orders in case your future measures should not be approved of by our Honourable Masters. For the above reasons we have declined delivering the letters you sent us.

We hope you will on serious consideration excuse us for being so cautious in an affair of such consequence.

We are, &c., &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

47. *Extract from a letter from Mr. Sykes, dated Cossimbazar, 8 July,* 1756.

This morning Mr. Holwell, Court, Walcott and one Burnet,[1] a writer, passed by in their way to Muxadavad prisoners and in irons. Holwell wrote Mr. Law, the Chief of the French factory, for a little bread and butter and other necessaries as they had had only rice and water ever since they left Calcutta which is upwards of 15 days. They were in an open boat exposed to all weathers. Holwell wrote us the following account.

On the 18th ultimo Messrs. Manningham and Frankland deserted the fort, the next morning the President, Commandant, Adjutant General, and Mackett likewise left the fort and got on board a ship and immediately weighed and left the remainder of the garrison not one boat or sloop by which they could escape. By the above desertions the government devolved to Holwell when he and the remainder of the garrison defended themselves gallantly. The 20th and 21st they fought all day and night when the Captain of the Train informed them they had not powder or ball that

[1] Mr. Burdett.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

would serve a day longer, upon which a flag of truce was hung out. During the time they were parling the back gate was betrayed by some Dutch soldiers to the Nabob so that then they could do nothing but surrender themselves prisoners at discretion. During these two days warm fighting there were about 25 killed and 70 wounded of the best men. As soon as the Nabob arrived in the fort he found with covenanted servants, soldiers and officers to the number of 160 who were put into a place called the Black Hole and jamed so close that out of 160 put in alive the next morning 110 was brought out dead for want of air. Jenks, Reveley, Law, Eyres, Bailie, Cooke, Captain Buchanan, Scott and all our other military officers and Covenanted servants dead. The writers and officers behaved bravely. A prodigious number of Moors are killed. All the night our poor gentlemen were in the Black Hole the Nabob's people kept firing at them through the door.

This is the purport of Holwell's letter. I hope we shall all soon get clear off.

48. *Letter sent Mr. Roger Drake, after the loss of Calcutta; in answer to one sent Mr. John Young, Chief of the Prussian Factory, wherein he requested to be informed of the sentiments of the different Nations, in regard to his, and his Council's conduct during his government. Dated l'Hotel des Prusses,* 10 *July,* 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR,—In compliance to your request, I shall now give you an account of the prevailing opinions, regarding the late disaster of Calcutta, and previously thereto, beg, and insist, that the narrative herein collected as an epitome of fluctuating sentiments and ideas of Europeans and country people, without the least aim of mine to reflect on, or reproach any person whatsoever.

First I shall begin with the Nabob, 'tis reported that he declares you used his *perwana,* and bearer thereof, with the utmost contempt, when he demanded Kissendasseat; for which, from Rajamull he returned from his so far advanced march against the Nabob of Purnea with his army, to reduce you to his commands. In his march towards Calcutta, they say, Fuckeer Toujar went or sent, I cannot say which, nor how many times, to exhort and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

incline you to pacify measures, which you would neither hear nor accept of; but in lieu thereof, threatned him at last if he dared to return again on that subject. After the Nabob had so easily and unexpectedly reduced Calcutta, and found you were gone, he on his return wrote to the Governour of Fort Saint George, representing you as a person of an extraordinary turn of temper, genius and character, for the employment you had; as appears from the manner you affronted him, and the constant venal prostitution of your *dusticks* to the use of the country people, which is a manifest defrauding of his revenues, no longer to be bore with, and forced him to the resentment he took, and now regretted; but never could for your sake reconcile himself ever to the return to, or settlement of any English man in Bengal; this letter he showed to the French and Dutch Directors, who as far as I could observe of the former, approved of what he wrote. These I think are the material objections and reproaches made by the Nabob, and principal people of the country; what others say, can be of no consequence, as they frequently are misled in their opinions of the best Governours and best of men.

I shall now relate what passed with the French. Male and female of all degrees seemed from the conduct of affairs at Cossimbuzar, to exult and rail; especially in the reduction of Calcutta, their reproaches were so keen and bitter, and their insinuations, so shameful and vile; that in spite of the stand I made against them in vindication of their many ill-grounded assertions, the torrent became so strong to stem, that I was fain to retire, and shut myself up in the Octagon.[1] Scandal was so rife and delusions so powerful that the same opinions and reproaches were found in the mouths of all degrees of persons. You were men without religion, decorum or decency. Your *summum bonum* consisted in excessive drinking, high living, and no oeconomy, at the expence of others, wherefore finding yourselves bankrupts, you had long ago schemed this base desertion of Calcutta, to get into your power the money and effects of the country people and Armenians. To strengthen this very odd and unaccountable opinion, the banks of Venice and Genoa were already stored with a part of your creditors' money. Cowardice,

[1] The Prussian factory.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

want of measures and authority in the defence of Calcutta, appeared to be a better grounded topick, but against whom I chose to be silent. The arguments already mentioned of the Moors, were often interspersed, concluding the whole with an indelible affront and reproach brought on all Europeans by your late behaviour; besides the damage of being forced to pay 350,000 rupees to the Nabob.

My distance from the Dutch, and of course little intercourse with them, curtails their scene almost like unto the foregoing; except that it cost them 450,000 rupees.

Now the English enter the scene, of whom about 20 (at first) that escaped death, came up. All of them mostly agreed, that no good measures were taken; the few places that were well defended, were too precipitately abandoned, and without the care and diligence usual, of carrying off or spiking up the cannon, and soon after that, to their great surprize and concern, they found the principal men of the civil and military were gone at, or rather before the town came to be attacked; on which dejection of spirits, and a troubled mind, enthralled some of the first rank; while disorder, tumult and mutinous proceedings, quite destitute of discipline prevailed among many of lesser authority and repute, in so much, that in three hours' time—because firing mostly ceased, the enemy from the houses near the fort assailed the bastions and curtains with showers of small shot, that it was dangerous to be on either—tamely submitted without attempt to sally out and dislodge them. They further agree, that some of the principals who remained to the surrender of the fort, were to have been of the number that deserted the day before, but were prevented by a good look out. The quantity of guns and ammunition were enough, they say, to have held out much longer; nay they believe and affirm, that two days more resistance would have obliged the Nabob and his army to decamp; if true, how dear were these two days.

Next appear Messrs. Watts and Collet of Cossimbuzar, after their release by order, from the Nabob. The arguments they have made use of in their own defence, are drawn up into a written narrative, to serve for that purpose; and indeed from what I have heard them say, I cannot find their conduct blameworthy; their argu-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

ments have operated so effectually on the French and Dutch, that they are now silent on their conduct. Those gentlemen seem however to entertain and consent to the ill conducted and worse defended affair of Calcutta, from the beginning to the end thereof; but despise and reject the report of a long and general consideration to withdraw the money and effects of the inhabitants &c. of the place; they further disapprove of the late ill conduct of Mr. Drake and his Council in the river, as if they assumed there a character and an authority to which they have no right and pretence.

Lastly Mr. Holwell with his fellow partners of misery and affliction, from the moment of their capture to that of their release, came to Chandernagore a few days ago. He has also drawn up a narrative of the whole affair, in vindication of his conduct, and of many worthy persons who narrowly escaped with him the late catastrophe of their late friends and companions. Mr. Holwell declares to and assures me that the previous knowledge of the desertion of others is an aspersion; as will evidently appear by the last council of war held with the principal men that fled; and says the information struck him with so much surprize, that it took him some time to recall presence of mind to demand a council of war for fresh measures to be taken; in which assembly Mr. Pearkes (his superior in rank) joined with the unanimous consent of all the other gentlemen in Council, yielding up to him the government of the Company's affairs and conduct of their defence. He begun with a strenuous and pithy exhortation to behave well, for reward thereof he offered three chests of the Company's treasure to be divided among those that should signalize themselves; all his promises and efforts, even threats served little at that time, to keep order and discipline; among many even some of rank that got drunk and would not submit to be commanded, nor persuaded to fight, as they ought to have done against the enemy. The brave and obedient were fatigued with long watching and much action; thus forlorn, he ordered a flag of truce to be hoisted, which had not the desired and expected effect among those barbarians; it served rather to hasten their destruction, by giving them time and occasion to draw under the walls of the fort, while firing ceased. Soon after they entered the gate to the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

river side, while some scaled the walls, and others entered the east gate. All that were taken alive, were immediately crammed into the Black Hole, to the number of 146 or 150, wounded and unwounded of all ranks. Out of that number there escaped alive 23 persons of whom Mr. Holwell was one; who declares, that the quantity of ammunition and warlike stores, asserted and already mentioned by others is false; and that it was morally impossible, for the bad measures and desertion of principals, to have held out one day longer. Thus you have, as promised, an abridgment of the cause of the Nabob's resentment, and fall of Calcutta. Since I have gone so far with the opinions of others, it remains that I should give mine, which is to recommend a coalition of parties, to cure the wound that may otherwise canker; and that it may be easy and safe it is necessary little be said, far less published, for the interest of your Honourable Masters and yourselves.

JOHN YOUNG.

49. *Protest of the late inhabitants of Calcutta against Mr. Charles Manningham's going to the Coast. Dated, off Fulta, 10 July, 1756.*

TO THE HONOURABLE ROGER DRAKE, ESQ.

HONOURABLE SIR,—Understanding that Charles Manningham Esq. intends going to Madrass in order to represent the unfortunate loss of Calcutta and the situation of the remaining part of the Colony; as that gentleman and Mr. Frankland left the place before any retreat was agreed to and afterwards refused joining your Councils when sent for, contrary to both their duty and honour, we are of opinion that either of those gentlemen are most unfit to represent transactions, which (as they absented themselves) they must know very little of, and therefore request that neither they nor any member of Council may be permitted to abandon the remains of the Colony and the Company's effects scattered throughout the country.

We are honourable Sir, Your most obedient humble servants.

Signed by all the Junior Servants and some of the principal inhabitants that were left.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

50. *Letter from Council, Dacca, to Court of Directors. Dated, the French Factory, Dacca, 12 July, 1756.*[1]

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURS,—1. The present melancholly situation of your affairs in Bengal will appear a very sufficient apology for our not addressing you in the usual form. Of your Council, some are killed, some prisoners and those who remain retired with Mr. Drake we know not well whither. You have been doubtless long since informed of Ali Verdi Khan having named Seir Rajah Dowlat his successor to this province in prejudice of his nephews Newages Mahmud Khan and Sahid Hamud Khan, the former of which had his residence at Muxadavad, the latter in the Proonean country of which he was Nabob. The succession of Seir Rajah Dowlat notwithstanding this preference was greatly doubted, his competitors were rich and powerful, both men of much more experience in life, the one esteemed of abilities greatly superior. Fortune however had adopted him and took care to pave his way to that point of grandeur to which he is now arrived. In December last died Newages Mahmud Khan a few months after the Nabob of Proonea, and on the 9th of April Ali Verdi Khan breathed his last. The widow of Newages for some time maintained a faint shew of opposition to the succession of Seir Rajah Dowlat in favour of a boy named Muradel Dowlat, nephew to Seir Rajah Dowlat, and who had been adopted by her late husband. But deserted by her adherents she was necessitated to drop it and to claim the protection of Seir Rajah Dowlat at this time firmly established. Kissendas, son to Rajabullub, who had long acted as Prime Minister to Newages Mahmud Khan is said to have retired to Calcutta in March last with immense riches of his father's and of the widow of his late master. The protection granted to this man and the refusal of delivering him up when demanded is universally believed to be the cause of all our misfortunes. Umbrage taken at some new works of fortification which were carrying on at Calcutta and artful insinuations to the Nabob that the English were putting themselves in a state to make war upon him may be the pretences. On the 23rd of May the factory at Cossimbuzar was invested by

[1] This letter is dated 18 July, but its proper date is 12 July, as may be seen from Mr. Drake's letter of the 17-25 January, 1757, and Mr. Becher's letter of the 22 March, 1757.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

a body of about 500 men. From that time till the 3rd of June fresh forces were daily arriving, when the number is said to have consisted of 50,000. That day the Nabob Seir Rajah Dowlat likewise arrived with a large body of horse, the rear of his army. The day following he is said to have dispatched a messenger to Mr. Watts to signify his desire of a conference with him. This was complied with. Mr. Watts was no sooner in his presence than he was made prisoner and the messenger returned to the factory for Messrs. Collet and Batson, the only two gentlemen in Council at that time at Cossimbuzar. He told them their presence was necessary to undersign a paper to which Mr. Watts had set his name and which without theirs would not be valid. These two gentlemen likewise waited on the Nabob. The latter was immediately made prisoner and the former sent back to the factory with orders to the officer who commanded to deliver it up to whoever the Nabob should appoint to take possession of it with guns ammunition &c. His orders were conformed to and the Nabob took possession of it the 6th. This done, orders were issued for the march of the army towards Calcutta. For the particulars of the siege of that place and Fort William we must beg leave to refer Your Honours to some of those gentlemen who continued in the fort till it was taken. The accounts we have vary much and are difficult to reconcile. All agree in this that many brave men have died miserably, whose lives might have been saved by the smallest degree of good conduct and resolution in their leaders. That Mr. Drake refused listning to any terms of accommodation, said to have been proposed by the Nabob while at Hughly to avert the storm which threatened the Colony, is what we can hardly credit, though this is confidently affirmed. In a garrison so ill provided as it appears Fort William was, it would certainly have been eligible to have submitted to any [conditions] for the present, and to have waved his resentment till a change of circumstances might enable him to gratify it and to obtain such as were more advantageous. The Nabob, in his return from Calcutta after marching a number of his men through Chandernagore and committing many irregularities, extorted from the French the sum of 3 *lacks* of Rupees, and from the Dutch 450,000, and from the Danes 50,000. The French have behaved with the greatest humanity to such as have taken

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

refuge at their factory, and the tenor of their conduct every where to us on this melancholly occasion has been such as to merit the grateful acknowledgment of our Nation. The sloop, which in our correspondence with Monsieur Courtin Your Honours will observe, we became answerable for, to prevent the ill consequences of Mr. Amyatt's seizing her at so critical a juncture, is with her cargo we are informed safely arrived at Chandernagore.

2. It was on the 23rd of May as in a preceeding paragraph we have acquainted Your Honours that Cossimbuzar Factory was first invested. It was the 9th of June before we received any letter from the gentlemen in Calcutta ; it was dated the 3rd and in general terms directed us to be upon our guard as the Nabob had taken offence at some works which were carrying on at Calcutta and it was uncertain to what lengths his caprices and passion might lead him. Our situation and the want of embarkations rendered a compliance with their orders of the 7th (received the 12th) utterly impracticable. For our reasons fully deduced, we beg leave to refer Your Honours to our Consultation of the 12th. In these and our publick letters both which accompany this address to Your Honours (the Consultation of the 3rd and 5th excepted, 2 copies of which have been sent to Calcutta, but the originals we have not been able to get out of the factory) we have been sufficiently explicit to enable you to judge and determine on our conduct and shall not enter into a further detail.[1]

3. As your books and papers are all in the possession of the Nabob we cannot with exactness inform you of the loss you have sustained at your factory at Dacca. If they will permit us to extract a few Minutes from the books we shall shortly be able to make it up, and Your Honours may depend on having it by the first occasion.

4. As to ourselves we have lost everything. A consciousness of having to the utmost of our abilities discharged our duty to Your Honours and the hopes of your future favour, should it appear to you we have acted in such a manner as to deserve it, must for the present support us. Your Honours will do us the justice to believe that in the surrender of our factory without resistance we have not been actuated by any unmanly attachment to life. Every

[1] These Consultations appear to have been lost.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

necessary disposition our situation would admit of had been made, and while Fort William stood, our resolution was taken to defend ourselves to the last extremity. That gone, and all hopes of assistance cut off, it is certain we might have died, or by exasperating an ungenerous enemy, exposed ourselves to ignominy and torment, but this would in no shape have availed your Honours.

5. The French Gentlemen at Chandernagore and Cossimbuzar are warmly solliciting our liberty. If we are so happy as to obtain it, we purpose going to Madrass in the first ship, where we shall be ready to serve Your Honours in any suitable employment Your President and Council there may point out to us till your pleasure is known.

6. Exclusive of the gentlemen whose names appear at the foot of this letter there are prisoners with us here Mr. John Cartier, a factor of one year's standing, Mr. John Johnstone just commencing, Assistants (?), Lieutenant John Cudmore and Mr. Nathaniel Wilson, Surgeon. Mr. William Sumner the Second at this factory absent at Calcutta by permission, and who we hear is safe having been ordered on board ship some days before the place was taken. We advised the Gentlemen at Madrass of this unhappy event as soon as we could collect any particulars which we thought carryed an appearance of truth.

We are &c., &c., RICHARD BECHER, LUKE SCRAFTON, THOMAS HYNDMAN, SAMUEL WALLER.

51. *Letter from Council at Fulta to Messrs. Watts and Collet. Dated, off Fulta, 13 July, 1756.*

GENTLEMEN,—Your letter of the 8th instant came to hand this morning, and we now protest in behalf of our Honourable Employers against you William Watts and Mathew Collet Esqrs. for declining to obtain translation and delivery of the letters enclosed under your cover to Monick Chund, Roy Doolob, Golam Hossein Cawn and Coja Wazeed, for all damages and wrongs which may ensue by the deprivation of our priviledges as contained in the royal *phirmand* and do now positively direct you to follow the instructions we gave you in our letter of the 6th instant, having been

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

advised to take that step and esteeming it ourselves as advantageous and for the interest of the Honourable Company.

We are &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, W. MACKETT, P. AMYATT, THOMAS BODDAM.

52. *Letter from Council at Fulta to Council, Fort Saint George. Dated, off Fulta,* 13 *July,* 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—Our utmost efforts have been employed to dispatch to you sooner the intelligence of the capture of Calcutta by the Moors acting under orders of Souragge Dowlat, the new Nabob, which account we doubt not will have reached you before this can possibly arrive by means of *pattamars* from the *shroffs*[1] or foreign nations. A narrative of this unhappy event will be in our opinion faithfully related to you by Mr. Charles Manningham, which we have not time to commit at present to writing. The above gentleman we depute to your Honour, &c. on the United East India Company's behalf, and require from his representation that you will support us with the whole force you can obtain on your Coast, military and marine, together with a sufficient quantity of ammunition, cannon and all other warlike stores, military and marine, which may enable us to re-establish ourselves in these provinces, which we esteem of the most essential consequence to the East India Company and trade of India in general. It is highly proper to represent to your Honour &c., that the English here were established by patent from the *Grand Mogul,* under whose orders all *Subahs* should be dependant. But as your Honour, &c., are well acquainted that this province was overcome by Allyverde Cawn, who maintained his conquest by force of arms, so was it possessed by his grandson who assumed the title of Souragge Dowlat. Wherefore further to favour our cause and just complaints for restitution and right to the priviledges granted us by the royal *phirmaund,* we are to request you will without delay set forth to the *Grand Mogul* the enormities committed by the present Nabob on a nation that has always paid due obedience to the tenor of the *phirmaund,* nor infringed on its priviledges, requiring and entreating by his authority to re-establish us in all our rights, and that the loss sustained by the Company and

[1] Bankers.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

inhabitants of the Settlement may be made good. We are at present endeavouring to open a correspondence with the principal men, whom we are informed the Nabob attends to, in hopes to bring on a treaty untill we can obtain succour; and that we may in some measure be relieved from our present distress, being in the utmost want of all necessarys of life, and strict orders issued by the Government not to supply us with any provisions. The Dutch and French are also prohibited giving us any assistance. Their situation appears very precarious, and we are told the French have wrote for a large reinforcement from Pondicherry. Our determination is to keep the river untill we are informed of your Honour &c.'s, resolutions, and in case we are not able to procure any favour from the Government, or should be persecuted by the enemy, so as to be obliged to stand out to sea, we shall proceed to Vizagapatam. This we think proper to mention as it may be necessary that the ships in their way to the Bay call there for intelligence, which we shall lodge there, if we are able to procure any conveyances, for the ingratitude of our immediate servants has been such, that we are drove to the necessity of doing every individual office for ourselves, nor have we been able to procure a *pattamar* or a Persian writer, and it is with the utmost difficulty we have hitherto kept together a sufficient number of *lascars* to work our ships, and are daily apprehensive they will quit us on the first occasion. We have desired the gentlemen at Vizagapatam, to provide and hold in readiness what provisions of every kind they are able to procure, to be put on board the vessels coming down hither. We request your honour &c., to represent a full state of all the occurrences to Rear Admiral Watson, the Commander-in-chief of His Majesty's squadron, and entreat his aid and assistance with the Fleet which we hope may be able to proceed hither.

Monsieur Le Bon (who had command of one of our advanced batteries and defended the same very gallantly) accompanys Mr. Manningham, and will in case of accident happening to Mr. Manningham, deliver you these advices, we esteeming Monsieur Le Bon qualified to give you a circumstantial detail of our military proceedings, as also inform you of the various stores we are in want of.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

As we imagine the news of this capture will produce very bad consequences in England to the Honourable Company's affairs, if they receive it without being informed at the same time of there being a prospect of our resettling in Bengall, we are to request your Honour &c., will alter your resolution for sending the *Delawar* to Europe, till you know the success of the forces you may be able to assist us with.

We are, &c., &c, ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, W. MACKETT, P. AMYATT, THOMAS BODDAM.

53. *An Account of the capture of Calcutta by Captain Grant, dated* 13 *July*, 1756.[1]

As the siege of Calcutta and Fort William and the causes of the loss of them, will undoubtedly be represented in various ways; I think my duty, as well as my having had once the honor of your acquaintance and countenance, require that I give you, at least, the particulars of the military transactions; which, my having been appointed to act as Adjutant General during the troubles, enables me to do with more certainty than I could, had I been stationed at any particular post, as I issued out all orders from the Governor, and saw most of them put in execution.

I must refer you to a narrative of Mr. Drake's for what relates to the negotiations and correspondence with the Government preceeding.

The surrender of Cossimbuzar on the 4th June, by the Chief's being decoyed under many specious pretences to visit the Nabob in his camp before that place, and, on his being made prisoner, induced to deliver it up, you must be informed of ere now, we having dispatched *pattamars* as soon as we received the news on the 7th.

We may justly impute all our misfortunes to the loss of that place, as it not only supplied our enemys with artillery and ammunition of all kinds, but flushed them with hopes of making as easy a conquest of our chief Settlement not near so defensible in its then circumstances. Cossimbuzar is an irregular square

[1] A version of this letter, published in the *Indian Antiquary* for November, 1899, was taken from a copy of the original letter (dated 'Fulta, on board the *Success* Galley, 13 July, 1756'), made for John Debonnaire on 22 February, 1774. Presumably it was addressed to Mr. Orme or to some other gentleman at Madras.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

with solid bastions, each mounting 10 guns mostly 9 and 6 pounders with a saluting battery on the curtain to the river side of 24 guns from 2 to 4 pounders, and their carriages, when I left the place in October last, in pretty good order, besides 8 cohorn mortars 4 and 5 inches, with a store of shells and grenades. Their garrison consisted of 50 military under the command of Lieutenant Ellet, a serjeant, corporal and 3 *matrosses*[1] of the artillery and 20 good *lascars*. The ramparts are overseen by two houses which lay within 20 yards of the walls, but as each is commanded by 5 guns from the bastions, the enemy could hardly keep possession of them.

When we received the news of Cossimbuzar's being in the Nabob's possession, and of his intentions to march towards us with the artillery and ammunition of that place and with an army of 20,000 horse and 30,000 gunmen, who had been encouraged with the promise of the immense plunder expected in Calcutta, it was full time to enquire into the state of defence of a garrison, which had been neglected for so many years, and the managers of it lulled in so infatuate a security, that every rupee expended on military services was esteemed so much lost to the Company.

By last year's shipping there was positive orders from the Company to execute a plan sent home by Colonel Scot for their approbation, but his death was thought too sufficient an excuse to postpone what they had so little inclination to have executed. By a later ship we were still further pressed by the Company to put our Settlement in the best state of defence possible, as there was great appearance of a French war. Captain Jones of the artillery, in September last, thinking it more particularly his duty to represent the defenceless state the garrison was in, and the situation of the cannon and ammunition, gave in a representation to the Governor and Council of what was immediately necessary for the defence of the place in case of a French war; such as making outworks, mounting the cannon which lay then useless for want of carriages, and putting their stores and ammunition in the best condition possible. The stile and form of this paper, and the manner of delivering it in, it seems gave offence, and Captain Jones was reprimanded for his irregularity in not delivering such representations first to the Commanding Officer of the troops.

[1] A sailor. Almost all the artillerymen were sailors.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

However, though it contained many truths proper to be considered, there was no further notice taken of its contents, nor no orders given for any military preparations; trusting in the same kind fortune that had for so many years defended them in peace and security, though even at this time, we were dayly insulted by constant encroachments and impositions by the Country Government, and though it had been strongly recommended by the Directors, to keep our garrison at Cossimbuzar in a proper state of defence as troubles were likely to ensue on the death of the Nabob who was then very old and could not live long, so negligent were we as to disregard the precaution, and even after his death, when competitors were contending for the Government, we thought ourselves so litle concerned in the consequences, that no addition of officers, men nor ammunition was made to the usual garrison of Cossimbuzar nor any demand from thence for it.

On the receipt of the letters by the *Delawar* a few weeks preceding our troubles, there was orders given to repair the old Line before the fort to the river side, and prepare carriages for 50 pieces of cannon 24 and 18 pounders (which had lyen unregarded at the wharff for three years past) in order to have them mounted on this Line, against an attack by water. The carriages on the bastions were at the same time ordered to be repaired, but so dilatory was the execution of these orders and so litle was it thought necessary to have them forwarded with any expedition, that when we received the news of the loss of Cossimbuzar the 7th instant that it could be only said they were begun, and but very few of the carriages patched for the guns on the ramparts; and besides the two field pieces we had from Madarass, not another piece of ordinance, fit to be drawn out of the fort.

On receiving the unexpected news of the loss of a place, we thought capable to stand out against any numbers of a country enemy while they had provisions, and with such artillery and stores as they generally use, It was thought proper to join the military captains and Engineer to the Council in order to form a Council of war; they were afterwards desired to retire to consider of the properest methods for the defence of the inhabitants and Town of Calcutta in case of an irruption of the Moors. Accordingly we gave it as our oppinions, that batterys should be

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

erected in all the roads leading to the fort at such distances as could be anywise defensible with the small number of troops we had; that the inhabitants should be immediately formed into a body of militia; all the carpenters and smiths in the place taken into the Fort to prepare carriages; the ammunition and stores put in the best order, and *lascars* and *cooleys* taken into pay for the use of the cannon and other works to be done, and likewise what *sepoys* and *peons* could be got to be formed into a body under the command of some European. It may be justly asked why we did not propose, the only method that as I thought then, and now do, could give us the least chance of defending the place, in case of a vigorous attack, the demolition of all the houses adjacent to the fort and surrounding it with a ditch and glacee; but so litle credit was then given, and even to the very last day, that the Nabob would venture to attack us, or offer to force our lines, that it occasioned a generall grumbling and discontent to leave any of the European houses without them. Nay, the generallity wanted even to include every brick house in the place, Portuguese and Armenian, and thought it hard that any inhabitant should be deprived of protection against such an enemy. And should it be proposed by any person to demolish so many houses as would be necessary to make the fort defensible, his oppinion would have been thought pusilanimous and ridiculous, had there been sufficient time to execute such a work as there was not, nor would it be possible to destroy half the number in triple the time, especially as we had not powder sufficient to blow them up.

From the 7th to the 16th (when the Nabob's advanced guard attacked our redoubt at Perrin's Gardens) all precautions were taken to forward every work that was thought necessary to be done. The militia was formed without loss of time, Mr. Manningham appointed Collonel, Frankland, Lieutenant-Collonel, and Messrs. Holwell, Macket and Mapletoft captains; and subalterns for 3 companys. Our batterys were finished and our troops disposed of as you see them in the plan which since my coming on board I have endeavoured to sketch out from memory, to give you a better idea of our situation. The Militia were constantly disciplined morning and evening and the utmost spirit and resolution shewn by every person concerned to prepare everything for the reception

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of an enemy from whom they expected no quarter. Our stores and ammunition were in the utmost bad order when we begun our preparations, no cartridges of any kind ready: the small quantity of grape in store had lyen by so long, that it was destroyed by the worms; no shells filled nor fuses prepared for small or great. The few that were thrown at the siege burst half way. There was 2 iron mortars, one of 13, and the (other) of 10 inches sent out about 3 years ago. The 10 inch mortar, we had just finished the bed for it, but the 13 inch one lay by useless for want of one; though there was upwards of 300 shells sent out for both, all that could be prepared was not above 20 and such as was thrown of them burst, some after quitting the mortar and others half way. We had but a small quantity of powder, and the greatest part of that damp. But you will be surprised to hear, that there was nothing known of this bad state of our stores and ammunition till the night before the Governor's retreat. There happened unfortunately, a misunderstanding to subsist between the Commandant and Captain Witherington who commanded the Train, which prevented Captain Minchin's having the Returns he ought of the stores and ammunition; at least the latter did not exert himself properly in his command, which I imagine was owing to the Governor's giving too ready an ear to Witherington's complaints of Minchin, he happening at the same time to be but upon indifferent terms with the Governor. These animositys amongst the persons who had the whole command and charge of the garrison in their hands did not contribute a litle to our misfortunes. Upon my being appointed Adjutant General I wrote down dayly what orders I thought might be necessary, and shewed them to the Governor for his approbation; They were afterwards issued out to the Adjutants of the military and militia, and by them carried to the commanding officer of each corps. Colonel Manningham, Lieutenant Colonel Frankland and Commandant Minchin for the more regular detail of duty were appointed Field Officers, to mount at the outworks dayly by rotation. I think amongst the first orders given on the news of the Nabob's approach, Captain Witherington was ordered to give in immediately a particular Return of the guns, ammunition and stores fit for service, as likewise of his company, volunteers entered, such as sea captains and Portu-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

guese helmsmen and *lascars*, and everything else relating to the artillery. But the whole was never complyed with and only a return of the guns and ammunition given the night before the Governor retreated, being the 18th. I pressed dayly to the Governor the necessity there was of having his orders obeyed, and was sorry to receive no other answer, than that Witherington was a strange unaccountable man, and that he did not know what to do with him. Captain Minchin pressed likewise to have his orders complyed with in this respect, but in vain. From what motive or partiality to the man I cannot guess, without that his making a bustle and constant noise, recommended him as a very active man, who could not be supplyed was he suspended. I often repeated to the Governor the bad consequence that would ensue from trusting the safety of the garrison (as it chiefly depended on the state of our ammunition and stores) to the will and management of such a man, without giving any account or Return of his proceedings.

Our intelligence of the Nabob's motions, and numbers was always very uncertain, and we could never be thorowly perswaded that he would advance against our batterys. The most we imagined was that he would form a blockade and cut off our provision untill we came to an accommodation and comply with his requests; though I believe those demands were only pretences, and the generall oppinion that prevails is, that he was resolved for some time past to rout the English out of the country, having on some account been irreconcilably irritated with us. What greatly contributed to harrass us was our *lascars* and *cooleys* desert-ing us on the Nabob's approach, till at last we had not a *cooley* to cary a bale or sandbag on the ramparts, nor a *lascar* to draw or work a gun, but totally reduced for the working of our cannon to about 36 men of the artillery for the bastions, out baterys and Labratory, and those very badly disciplined. The volunteers were chiefly employed about the stores and some of them on the bastions.

In this situation we received advice from Ensign Paccard the 16th in the afternoon, that the enemy were then bringing up heavy cannon to play upon the redoubt and sloop that lay before it for the defence of the ditch.[1] He was immediately reinforced with an

[1] This is the Maratha Ditch.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

18 pounder the 2 brass fieldpieces and 40 men under the command of Lieutenant Blagg, being resolved to give them a warm reception on their approach. They had got six pieces of cannon playing on the redoubt and sloop when the reinforcement arrived, but on our fieldpieces beginning to play they withdrew their cannon, and abandoned that post, inclining to the southward, where they had on the opposite side of the ditch got possession of a *top*[1] of wood from whence they killed one of our gentlemen volunteers and 4 of the military. They killed 4 Europeans on board the sloop. Before dark the whole body inclined to the southward, and crossed the ditch that surrounds the Black Town, the extent of it being so great, and passable in all parts, that it was impossible to do anything to interrupt them. Lieutenant Blagg about 8 at night demanded a further reinforcement to cover his retreat, as he was apprehensive of the enemys advancing through some of the lanes to cut off his communication. Captain Clayton was ordered with a party to that purpose, who returned safe with Lieutenant Blagg about 10 at night, and left Ensign Paccard in possession of the redoubt with his former detachment.

Next morning being the 17th, Monsieur le Beaume (who was a French officer, and left Chandnagor on a point of honor) desired to be permitted to take possession of the Goal about 200 yards advanced before the battery A, and where three roads terminates into the place. He was accordingly ordered with 2 small cannon, 12 military and militia, and 40 *buxeries* or gunners; he broke embrasures through the Goal House for the cannon, and made loop-holes all round for the musquetry. All this day the enemy did not advance in sight of any of our batterys, but the plunderers annoyed the black inhabitants greatly which we could not possibly help without risquing our men to be shot at from behind houses and walls. Our *peons* brought in severall of their people, but their reports were so different that we could not depend on it. They informed us that they had all the Cossimbuzar cannon with some brought from Muxadavat of heavier mettall, about 25 Europeans and 80 Chittygong *fringys*[2] under the command of one who stiled himself Le Marquis de St. Jacque, a French renegaid,

[1] Tamil *tōppu* = grove or orchard.

[2] Half-caste Portuguese.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

for the management of their artillery, about 15,000 horse and 10,000 foot, but we found afterwards this to be short of their numbers. From the three grand batterys as many men as could be spared were detached to the breastworks thrown up in the small lanes, and such houses as most commanded our batterys taken possession with serjeants and corporals' guards. This night all our *peons* deserted us, and in short every black fellow, who could make his escape, abandoned us. Upwards of 1,000 bearers left us in one night, on being ordered to carry the powder from the Magazeen into the Fort. And on the plunderers's advancing into the town, all the Portuguese familys crowded within our lines for protection to the number of some thousands.

The 18th in the morning the enemy began to make their appearance in all quarters of the town, but did not seem as if they would advance openly against our batterys. And by their method of advance we could foresee that they intended to force their way within our lines by taking possession of the different houses one after another. This caused us to reinforce such houses as we could most annoy them from as much as possible. About 11 o'clock they brought up two pieces of cannon against the Goal, one of them an 18 pounder by the size of the ball. We advanced an officer with 20 men and 2 field pieces to reinforce Monsieur le Beaume, but the walls of the Goalhouse were so weak that they were hardly any defence against their cannon. However they kept possession of it till about 2 when Le Beaume and Ensign Carstairs (who commanded the party) being both wounded, and numbers of their men killed, had liberty to retire within Captain Clayton's battery. The enemy instantly took possession of that post, and all the adjacent houses, losing no opportunity to take advantage of our retreat. They did not long keep possession of the houses on which our cannon from the batterys could bear, though our metal was not sufficiently heavy to demolish strong pucka houses, as we afterwards found. They poured in numbers into the Goal, Allsop's, Dumbleton's, and the houses behind that and Lady Russell's; and though our men from the tops and windows of the houses kept a constant fire on them as they advanced and our cannon from the fort and our batterys played on every house they could see them in possession of, and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

endeavoured, though with little success, to fling shells amongst them (which had they been properly fitted for service would have been of much more use than our cannon) yet the superiority of their numbers under cover of the houses[1] at all quarters made it impossible for our people to withstand such showers of small shott, as they fired into the houses we had possession of. They first broke into our lines through Mr. Nixon's house and fixed their collours (as is their custom every inch of ground they gain) at the corner of the Tank. We were now obliged to abandon the breastwork close to Mr. Putham's and all the houses of that Square, the enemy in multitudes taking possession of each of them. They brought some heavy pieces of cannon through the lane twixt Minchin's and Putham's houses and planted them at the corner of the Tank and door of Mr. Nixon's to play upon us as we passed and repassed to and from the batterys. Having thus lodged themselves in all the houses of the Square on which only two guns from the flank of the north-east bastion could bear, and that at too great a distance to annoy them much, they had a secure footing within our lines; and those houses (being most of them *pucka*)[2] with the multitudes that occupied them were too strong lodgements for us to pretend to dispossess them of; being at the same time attacked in some manner at each of the other posts. This situation of the enemy exposed the battery B to have its communication cut off from the fort, as the enemy might surround them in the rear by advancing through the lane that passes by Captain Grant's and between Captains Buchanan's and Witherington's house; it was therefore thought necessary to order Captain Buchanan to retire with his cannon to the battery D where 2 embrasures had been opened

[1] Here follows an erased passage, '(which method and bush-fighting, these fellows are too near on a par with Europeans) soon enabled them to force one house after another, and oblige our people to abandon the houses they were in possession of. The first place where they broke in upon our line was at Mr. Nixon's, by breaking down the walls of the Compound behind, exposed to the fire of a sergeant's guard that had possession of that house and the adjacent breastwork, and pouring in through that into the Square at the corner of the Tank, the sergeant seeing them advance in such numbers made the best of his way to Captain Buchanan's battery where he was detached from, and left 8 or 10 of our gentlemen volunteers who had possession of Captain Minchin's house to force their way through the enemy where two of them were left behind and destroyed.'

[2] Of masonry.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

in expectation of such a retreat. I think it was about 4 afternoon when I delivered this order and I then proceeded to Captain Clayton's battery at A where they had the warmest part of the attack since our retreat from the Goal at 2, by the enemy's keeping possession of all the houses round it, and though we sent an 18 pounder (which by that time we had got mounted on a truck carriage, and were obliged to have drawen to the battery by the militia in the fort, all our *lascars* and *cooleys* having abandoned us) in order to play upon the houses which the enemy possessed, they still not only maintained their ground but advanced apace through one house to another; this occasioned Captain Holwell to go in person to the Governor. Whether by a representation of the state they were in or at his own request he obtained an order to abandon that battery; which having been of the utmost consequence, ought not to have been done but by a determination of a council of war: especially as there was not such numbers killed, but it might have been easily maintained, at least till dark. On my arrivall at the battery I found all the guns spiked, except the two field pieces, with which they were then ready to retreat. I was not a little surprised to find things in this situation, and by the Governor's orders, as they informed me. I therefore requested their stay for a few minutes till I galloped to the fort for further orders. The Governor made me answer that the post was represented to him as no longer tenible, and had accordingly ordered its being withdrawen. Now the guns were spiked, there was nothing further to be done than to get them likewise withdrawen, as leaving them behind must have greatly encouraged the enemy, and convinced them of the pannick that seized us, which only could occasion such a precipitate retreat. As I was going back to the battery I found Captain Clayton and his command with the 2 fieldpieces half way towards the fort. I prevailed upon him to return with me, that, if possible we might not undergo the ignominy of leaving our guns behind us in such a precipitate manner. But when I ordered half the men to lay down their arms in order to draw first the 18 pounder while the other half stood with their arms for defence of the battery, not a man would stir or pull a rope. As nothing could be done I left Captain Clayton to make his retreat as regular as he could. I found by this time Captain Buchanan had like-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

wise received orders to retire from the battery D, upon what account I know not. Captain Smith's battery at C was also ordered to be abandoned as maintaining that alone could answer no end, which was very regular done, and their guns brought to the fort gate. The next thing considered of, was a disposition for the defence of the fort, which was all that was left us now to maintain: for few expected that the batterys would have been so suddenly quitted, and most people foresaw that the fall of them would be attended with fatall consequences, as the enemy's getting possession of the houses contiguous to the fort, such as Cruttenden's, Eyre's, the Church and the Company's, all of them the strongest *pucka*, would in such a manner command the bastions and ramparts that it would be impossible to stand at the guns, exposed to the small arms of such a multitude as would occupy those and other houses, especially as the parapets of the bastions were very low, and the embrasures so wide that they hardly afforded any shelter. We had cotton bales and sandbaggs, which might in some measure supply this defect, but were so abandoned by all sorts of labourers that we could not get them carried upon the ramparts, and our military and militia so harrassed for want of rest and refreshments, that it was impossible to get them to do anything. This consideration determined us to take possession of the above houses and Church with the troops retired from the out batterys. We had laid in sufficient stores of provisions, but the irregularity in not appointing proper persons for this, as well as other particular duties (a fatall neglect to us from the beginning) and the generall desertion of the black fellows amongst whom were the cooks, left us to starve in the midst of plenty. All the men at the outposts had no refreshment for 24 hours, which occasioned constant complaints and murmurings all this night as well from them as those in the fort. Such was the irregularity and distress amongst them, that some had broke open *godowns* where liquors stood and where numbers made so free with it, that they were rendered incapable of any duty. The detachment in the Company's House finding the enemy had got possession of Captain Ranney's, thought that their post on the approach of day would not be tenible, and that their communication might be cut off by their being surrounded in the lane that leads to the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

waterside along the new *godowns*, where there was no guns to flank, so applied to the Governor and obtained leave to abandon it, in which situation it was left all night. This and our situation in generall left us but a bad prospect for next morning. Half of our men in liquor in the fort, no supply of provisions or water sent to those in the houses without, the drum beat to arms three different times on allarm of the enemy's being under the walls, but hardly a man could be got on the ramparts: the enemy's taking possession of the Company's House, as was expected, would have made it impossible to stand [on] the southerly bastions and new *godowns* nor any boats to stay at the *gaut*. At a council of war held at 8 at night, Collonels Manningham and Frankland were permitted to see the European ladies on board the ships, then before the fort, and afterwards to return, but such crowds of Portugees women and children filled all parts of the fort as occasioned the greatest noise and confusion. It was thought hard to refuse them protection, as their husbands carryed arms for the defence of the place, but undoubtedly it was wrong to risque the safety of the whole on such a consideration.

About one in the morning a second council of war was called, to consider of our then situation, and what in all probability we might expect it to be on the approach of day; as likewise, from every circumstance considered, for what time we might reasonably expect to maintain the fort. The Captain of the Artillery was first asked what quantity of amunition we had then in store (you must observe the Governor never procured a return of it) and for what time he thought it would last according to the expences of the day past. His answer was, that at the same rate, it would not be sufficient for above three days, and even a part of that, he was affraid was damp. This of itself, but added to the other circumstances still more, made it the unanimous oppinion that a retreat on board the ships must be determined on in that time, should no circumstances intervene to make it sooner necessary; as nothing but the utmost barbarity was expected from our enemy in case of surrender, as by fatall experience we have found to be the case, with such as fell into his hands. The majority were of opinion that as such a retreat was already fixed on, the delay of it even untill next morning could be attended with no sort of advan-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

tage, but might on the contrary produce such consequences as would either make it impracticable, or attended with the greatest risque and precipitation. For instance, did the enemy get possession of the houses we then occupied and the Company's, there was but little to prevent their forcing oppen the two barriers that lead to the fort from the Company's House and Cruttenden's; and from those two houses they might keep such a fire on the *gaut* and wharff, as would make it impossible for a boat to lye there; either of which would have effectually prevented our retreat. By making our retreat that night, though late, having a sufficient number of boats then at the *gaut*, we might, at least, have carryed off all the Company's treasure, and secured every European safe on board before daylight. This opinion Mr. Holwell in particular maintained very strenuously, and several other gentlemen. It was proposed by others to send Omychaund to treat with the Nabob, but he absolutely refused to go, and it was then proposed to write to him, but our Persian writer with every black fellow deserting us made that impossible. In this state of irresolution attended with great confusion did we remain, without fixing on any settled scheme, till near daylight, then adjourning to wait what the morning might produce, in hopes of making our retreat the next night. For no person after the report of our ammunition and hearing the situation we were in stated, had any further thoughts of defending the place, longer than untill with any regularity and safety we could accomplish our retreat on board the ships. By break of day, finding the enemy had neglected in the night to take possession of the Company's House and Ensign Paccard (who had been ordered from Perrin's) having offered to maintain it with 20 military, his proposall was readily agreed to. The other outpost had been but little disturbed in the night, the enemy having satisfied themselves with setting some houses on fire, and taking possession of those from which they thought they could annoy us in the day, such as Captain Rannie's, Messrs. Watts's, Tooks's and Omichaund's to the east of Eyres's and all the houses from Mr. Eyres's to Mr. Griffith's, likewise the hospitall, Captain Clayton's and Captain Wedderburn's to the southward, and had brought some cannon to the gate of Mr. Bellamy's Compound, as well as behind the battery A which we abandoned, and in the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Compound of the Playhouse. From all these different places they kept a constant fire on the houses we occupied, as well as upon the ramparts. About 9 o'clock, Lieutenant Bishop who commanded in Mr. Eyre's House desired leave to retire, being no longer able to support himself against the fire of some thousands from the houses to the eastward and northward of him. He was ordered if possible to maintain his post till evening, but the fire thickening, and numbers of his men killed and wounded he was permitted to make his retreat. About the same time Ensign Paccard was brought in wounded, and the enemy had filled the Compound of the Company's House. Captain Clayton found himself very warmly attacked in the Church from the cannon planted behind our battery and in the Playhouse Compound, and the small arms from the houses. He had severall of his men killed with the cannon shott which came through the Church. The outposts were then all ordered to be withdrawen. Messrs. Manningham and Frankland were not returned from on board the ships though the Governor alledges that he sent for them. The ship *Dodly* where they were on board dropt down below the fort, which the other ships and sloops seeing, they followed. This with the confusion in the fort occasioned numbers of the gentlemen to seize on such boats as they could get hold of, to provide for their own safety, and by this time more than half of the officers of the militia were on board the ships. We fired on the enemy wherever they appeared from all the guns on the fort, and must have done terrible execution amongst them, but did not much contribute to slacken their fire. Betwixt 10 and 11 we were allarmed on the ramparts by a report that the enemy were forcing their way at the barrier that leads from the Company's House to the wharff. But when I came down I found it to be false, they were not then advanced so far. On my return to the back gate, I observed the Governor standing on the stairhead of the *gaut*. I came up to him to know if he had any commands, but found him only beckoning to his servant who stood in a *ponsay* a litle above the *gaut*. I saw numbers of boats setting off from different places with Europeans in them. The Governor just took time to mention the bad consequences of the ships droping down, that it discouraged everybody, and seeing the boats sett off, and not another then at the *gaut*,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

except a *budgerow* where Mr. Macket and Captain Minchin were going aboard of, called to me, that he found every one were providing for their own security; and without giving me time to make answer run up along shore to the *ponsay* where his servant was aboard. I first thought he only wanted to speak to him to secure the boat, but seeing him step in in somewhat of a hurry, I followed, and before I came into the boat desired to know what he was about. On his making answer that he was going aboard the ships, I earnestly entreated he would first acquaint the garison of his design. He represented the impossibility of making a regular retreat on many accounts. That and the ships droping down discouraged everybody, all the boats being carried off, the enemy being in possession of the Company's and Mr. Cruttenden's houses which would prevent any's coming to the *gaut*, and the crowds of Portugeese women that crowded at the *gaut* to force themselves into any boats they could lay hold of, and said, that he supposed when they saw him retreat such as could possibly find boats would follow. Looking behind, I perceived Mr. Macket and Captain Minchin setting off in their *budgerow*, and the stairs full of Europeans pressing to do the same. I concluded the retreat to be generall, and that everyone who could lay hold of a conveyance would choose to escape falling into the hands of a merciless ennemy, and so with Mr. O'Hara thought it justifyable to follow the Governor in a state of such apparent confusion and disorder, though greatly grieved to see how many of my friends and countrymen were likely to fall a sacrifice for want of boats, as I believe there was not annother left at the *gaut* when the Governor came away. We got on board the *Dodly*, where Messrs. Manningham and Frankland with most of the women were. I then represented to the Governor the cruelty of abandoning so many gentlemen to the mercy of such an enemy, and requested he would order the ships and sloops to move up before the fort, by which means we should be able to send the boats under their cover, to bring off our distressed friends; but the captain of the ship representing the danger it would be attended with, and the impossibility of getting the ships back, in case they went up again before the fort, the Governor thought proper not to insist upon it; and the ships belonging to private owners, I doubt whether such an

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

order would be complyed with, as everybody then pursued his own safety independent of command. We are informed, that as soon as the Governor retreated those that found it impossible to follow, shutt the fort gates, chose Mr. Holwell as Governor and resolved to dye upon the ramparts, in case they could get no conveyance that night to make their escape, rather than surrender to the mercy of the enemy. They endeavoured in the evening to get boats for that purpose, but in vain. Except a few *budgerows* that were then with the ships, every other boat was carried away by the blackfellows. The ships fell down just within sight of the town. We could hear all the afternoon a constant [firing] of cannon and small arms; and at night saw numbers of the houses in fire. The place was taken next day the 20th afternoon, about 30 hours after the Governor left it, during which time upwards of 50 Europeans were killed on the bastions by the enemy's small arms from Mr. Cruttenden's, Eyres's, the Church and the Company's House. The firing was so hot from the top of the Church that they at last were obliged to abandon the easterly curtain and bastions. About 3 afternoon they made a signal for a truce; on which our people desisted firing. But they treacherously made use of it to crowd in multitudes under the walls, and with some ladders and bamboos scaled the easterly curtain and bastions which was abandoned under cover of their fire from the Church and other houses. Numbers were cut to pieces on the walls; all who wore red coats, without mercy. And such as were so unhappy as to be taken prisoners were at night put into the Black Hole, a place about 16 foot square, to the number of near 200 Europeans, Portugeese and Armenians, of which many were wounded. They were so crowded one upon another in this narrow confinement that by the heat and suffocation not above ten of the number survived untill morning. Some of those who give us the account, say that they fired upon them all night with small arms through the doors and windows, but this is contradicted by others. Mr. Holwell is one of the number who survived, and is now prisoner with the Nabob. 30 Company's servants and 15 officers we know to be dead and the Cossimbuzar and Dacca factorys prisoners. Captain Minchin, [Lieutenant Keen, Muir] and myself are all the officers here. Lieutenant Cudmore is at [Dacca], Ensign Walcot

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

prisoner with Mr. Holwell. These are all the officers alive, the rest were either killed on the ramparts or died in the Black Hole. Lieutenant Ellet who commanded at Cossimbuzar, shott himself after the place was delivered up. The Dutch and French have made up matters with the Nabob, the former for 4 and the latter for 5 *lacks* of rupees, and he is now returned victorious to his capital of Muxidabad. There is about 3 or 4,000 troops in Calcutta, they keep possession of the fort; but have destroyed the Factory House.

The author of this Paper was, it appears, appointed to act as Adjutant General at the siege of Calcutta, and deserted the garrison with the Governor and others. Captain Minchin, Lieutenant Keen, Muir, and himself were all the officers that went down with Drake to Fulta.

A. C. S. August 10, 1829.

It appears by another account that the Adjutant-General was Captain Grant.

54. *An Account of the manner of my retreat from Calcutta when besieged by the Moors, and of the causes which induced me to accompany the Governor on board the ships. Captain Grant.*

On receipt of the advices of the capture of Cossimbuzar, and the Nabob's intention to march against Calcutta, amongst other regulations for the defence of the place, I was appointed to act as Adjutant General of our troops; in which station I afterwards issued out the daily orders from the Governor, and made such dispositions as had at different times been agreed on in councils of war. How far I have done my duty in that capacity and exerted myself in every other respect for the defence of the Settlement, I will submit it to the Governor and Council's answer to my letter given in to the Board of the 20th August[1] last, or the surviving inhabitants of Calcutta who were eye witnesses of my conduct. But as my retreat from thence is, I presume, the chief cause of

[1] Apparently refers to a missing letter, dated 20 August, 1756. See Letter from Holwell 30 November, 1756, para. 45.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the censure I have undergone (for want of a proper opportunity of acquitting myself) since that time; I will proceed to that particular: only in order to give a clearer idea of it, must first beg leave to represent the situation the garrison was in, and the resolutions taken the night preceding, being that of the 18th June.

Having withdrawn the batteries which defended the three principal avenues leading to the fort, the evening of the above day; the Company's House, Messrs. Cruttenden's and Eyre's, and the Church (all close to our walls) were taken possession of by the troops who retired from those batteries; and only the militia with 30 of the military continued for the defence of the fort. Till about eight at night I was employed in settling those outposts; in which time several resolutions had been taken in a council of war, of which I remained for some time ignorant; such as permitting Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, our two Field Officers, to escort the ladies on board the ships &c. The guard settled in the Company's House was soon after, on application made by some of the young gentlemen to the Governor ordered to be withdrawn, and that advantageous post left to be taken possession of by the enemy; whereby they would not only have a total command of the two southerly bastions and curtain, but likewise of the wharf and *gaut* where all our boats lay, and consequently have it in their power to obstruct our communication with the river. Continual duty and want of refreshment so harrassed both military and militia that before 12 at night, not a man could be brought on the ramparts, till dragged from the different corners of the fort where they had retired to rest; and by the help of liquor, which several of them met with, numbers were rendered incapable of any duty. This with constant calls from the outposts for provisions and water, and none ready dressed to supply them, occasioned a disorder and confusion in all quarters, not easy to be described. In this situation a council of war was called about one in the morning, to consider of the methods necessary to be pursued in such an exigency. We concluded that before daylight the enemy would take possession of all the houses which our men did not occupy and with the superiority of numbers keep such a fire with their musquetry on our outposts, as would oblige

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

them e'er long to retire into the fort; and consequently by the enemy's getting possession of those houses also, which lay so close to our walls, we saw ourselves liable in such a case, to be commanded from all quarters. The Captain of the Artillery reported at the same time that, at the rate of the consumption of amunition the preceding day, there was not remaining sufficient for two more. This latter circumstance occasioned a general consternation, as no one had suspected any want or scarcity of this kind. Why those, whose duty it was to know the state of the amunition, should be so ignorant in an affair of such consequence, they best can answer. I only know that from the first day I was appointed to act as Adjutant General, there were daily orders to have such returns given in, but were never obeyed, though I represented to the Governor in the most earnest terms the bad consequences of not having those, as well as all other orders which he issued out, most strictly complied with. But such was the levity of the times, that severe measures were not esteemed necessary. This unexpected report, added to the situation we otherwise were in, easily determined every member of the council of war to vote for a general retreat on board the ships before the expiration of the above time, as the only means of saving the Company's treasure and effects, and the lives and properties of the inhabitants. It was then proposed that, as a retreat was already unanimously determined upon, and no hopes left of maintaining the fort, or accommodating matters with the Nabob; the sooner it was set about it would be the better, as consequences might attend the delay of it, which afterwards might make it impracticable. In this opinion I was one who seconded Mr. Holwell, who strongly pressed immediately to begin a general retreat, and clear the factory of the crowds of Portugueze women, as they were likely to cause great confusion in what afterwards might be necessary to be done. Other members of the council of war (who I imagine must have had something more in view than the publick interest) strenuously opposed this proposal, and would have a retreat deferred in hopes of some favorable change either by treaty or otherwise. These disputes lasted till near day light, and then each person repaired to his particular post without determining anything certain of the time or manner of a retreat. The enemy having neglected to take

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

possession of the Company's House in the night, an officer and 20 men were placed in it about this time.

Such was the situation of things the 19th in the morning, when the want of rest for two nights before, and constant fatigue obliged me to retire for a little sleep, in order to fit me for the duties of the day, this being the time when the enemy gave us the least disturbance. As soon as I awoke, I came upon the ramparts and found that the enemy kept a pretty smart fire upon us, though not so as to annoy us much, as we still kept possession of the houses close to the fort. About 9 o'clock the outposts were very warmly attacked. The officer who commanded in the Company's House was brought in wounded, and those in the Church and Mr. Eyre's House had sent to acquaint the Governor, that the enemy poured in such vollies of musquetry upon them from the adjacent houses, as would oblige them to abandon their posts, if not soon relieved.

Having thus represented in as few words as possibly I could, the state of things in the fort and outposts to the time of my leaving it, there only now remains to lay before you the manner of it, and the motives which induced me to do it.

About 10 o'clock I received an alarm, when on the south east bastion, that the enemy had got possession of the Compound of the Company's House, and were forcing their way through the barrier that leads from thence to the fort; but when I came there, I found the report to be false. On my return towards the back gate, I saw the Governor standing on the stair head of the *gaut*, beckoning to his servant, who was in a boat about 50 yards above. I came up expecting he might have some commands for me, for I had not seen him before, since we broke up the council of war. When I addressed him, he pointed to me where the *Doddaley* and other vessells had fallen down below the Town, and numbers of boats full of Europeans were then proceeding on their way on board of them; saying that Messrs Manningham and Frankland, though sent for in the night, had still remained on board the *Doddaley* with the ladies; by which means they had so discouraged numbers of the gentlemen, as to induce them to provide for their own safety, in the same manner, and by their example. He then (without giving me time to make any answer) went down the stairs, up the waterside under the Line, and into the boat where his

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

servant stood. I was somewhat amazed at his sudden departure being entirely ignorant of his intentions, and only supposed he had gone to give some particular orders to his servant: but finding he did not return soon, I thought it my duty to follow him, as I still remained unacquainted with his designs. When I came to the boat, and desired to know what he intended, he replied that he was resolved to provide for his own safety, as he found others were doing. I entreated him that if that was his resolution, he would wait till it was first intimated to Mr. Holwell and the rest of the garrison, and make as good a retreat as the situation of things would bear. He said it would be impracticable to make a regular retreat in the confusion things were then in; especially for want of boats, most of them being carried off by those who went before. That he therefore thought it would be in vain to wait any longer; and supposed when the rest of the garrison saw him come off, such of them as could find conveyance would follow.

I had but little time for recollection in such a juncture, and was therefore the more readily determined by the circumstances which immediately ensued. Looking behind me at the stairs of the *gaut*, I saw it crowded with people pressing to get away; and amongst the rest Commandant Minchin and Mr. Mackett going into a *budjerow*. This I concluded to be in consequence of their seeing the Governor first make his escape; and according to what he told me before had not then the least doubts remaining, but every other person who observed him and could find conveyance would think the example of their Governor and Commander-in-chief a sufficient sanction for them to abandon a place, already declared not tenible above two days, and then in the greatest confusion. I likewise foresaw that those who should be obliged to remain behind for want of boats, would be exposed to the mercy of a cruel enemy, unless relieved by having conveyances sent them from the ships. My station of Adjutant General had fixed me to no particular post in the fort, but more properly was to attend the Governor for his orders, and act in a manner as his aidecamp. In the situation things appeared to me in this critical moment, my return to the shore when I saw every body was pressing to leave it, (and amongst them my Commander-in-chief; and other commanding officers being either already gone or setting

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

off) could be attended with no advantage. To embark the Company's treasure, and other effects, public and private, on board the ships, and make a safe and regular retreat with the troops and inhabitants, is all that any person can pretend to say, was aimed at, or ever thought of, since the last council of war. As all this was oversett by the Governor's departure, and the boats being carried off before and after him, there only remained, of what was possible to be done for the public welfare, either to bring up the ships before the fort, or send boats to bring off those who were necessitated to stay behind for want of them. My accompanying the Governor to the ships was undoubtedly more likely to contribute to either of those purposes, than returning to the fort, as I should be more in the way of receiving his orders, and giving my assistance, by returning with what conveyances or succours he might think proper to send. I could make no doubt, that as soon as he got on board, he would immediately think of sending such relief to those who were left behind, as their situation required; and to that purpose soon after our arrival I spoke to him in presence of Captain Young, the Commander, to move up with the *Doddaley*, and other ships as the only probable method that then remained, (all the boats, excepting one or two, having abandoned us, and crossed to the other side of the water). But most unfortunately Captain Young representing to him the danger such an attempt would be attended with, the Governor declined giving any orders in regard to it. I proposed the same thing at different times that day, but with as little effect.

Thus I have related the manner and motives of my retreat from Calcutta as minutely as my memory enables me; and in justice to myself I would long e'er now have submitted it to a proper enquiry, had not the scarcity of officers, and my long indisposition deprived me of the opportunity, and which in my above mentioned letter to the Governor and Council I declared to be my intention as soon as the troops then expected from Madras would arrive.

I shall only further add that if the reasons I have given appear not sufficient to justify my conduct in accompanying the Governor at such a time and with the circumstances above related, I desire any person to point out to me, what other method I could possibly have taken, that would have been attended with greater advan-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

tages; or whether, in the station I acted in, it was not the most consistent with my duty to attend the Governor, in order to rectify by the only means I could think of the disorders which then prevailed; and to give my assistance in executing what directions he might give for that purpose.

55. *Letter from Council, Dacca, to Council, Fort Saint George, dated* 13 *July*, 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—This is designed to inform you of a most melancholy and surprizing revolution in the Honourable Company's Settlements here in Bengall, having been all taken by the Nabob Serajah Dowlat. As we have not received the least advice from any of the gentlemen of Calcutta of a later date than the 9th of June, we are obliged to depend on the French for a particular account of the taking of Fort William. We now enclose your Honour, &c., the account received by Monsieur Courtin, the French Chief here, from their Secretary at Chandernagore. We see no reason to doubt the authenticity of it, more especially as every materiall circumstance is confirmed by the Moors, who have from the beginning assured us that the cause of the Nabob's anger against the English proceeded from the Governour and Council having given protection to one Kissendass who had been the Naib of this city. He retired to Calcutta in March last with great riches, part of which are said to belong to the widow of Nowagies Mawmud Khan, who died in November last, and whose riches Serajah Dowlat claimed on his coming to the *Subahship* of Bengal; when the Nabob sent a *perwannah* to demand him, Mr. Drake tore the *perwannah* and threw it in the face of his messenger. This insult provoked Serajah Dowlat to such a degree that they say he took an oath to drive the English out of Bengall which he very soon put in execution as you will observe Cossimbuzar was delivered without firing a gun and Fort William only resisted him three days. We take the liberty to enclose your Honour, &c., copies of our Consultations of the 27th and 28th ultimo, when we were obliged to surrender our factory and ourselves prisoners to Serajah Dowlat, from whom we are in hopes to obtain our liberty as he has already released Messrs. Watts and Collet, &c. If we are so happy as to get our liberty, our present

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

design is to proceed to Madras when we shall depend on your Honour, &c., Council's protection and kind assistance, having lost everything we had in the world except a few cloathes. We would have sent you copies of our Consultations and letters from the beginning of the dispute, but as this goes by a *pattamar* it would make too large a packet. We design by a French ship bound to Europe which is to leave Chandernagore next month, to address ourselves to the Honourable Court of Directors and give them the best account we are able of the miserable state of their affairs in Bengall. As we flatter ourselves your Honour, &c., Council will not think us any way to blame in delivering up our factory after the surrender of Fort William, we are to request your kind representation of our case should you have an opportunity of writing the Court of Directors before we have the pleasure to see you. As by all accounts the riches Mr. Drake, &c., have carried off with them are immense, we hope our Honourable Employers will be in some measure indemnified for the great loss they must have suffered by the taking their Settlements in Bengall.

We are etc. etc., RICHARD BEECHER, LUKE SCRAFTON, THOMAS HYNDMAN, SAMUEL WALLER.

56. *Extract from Fort Saint George Public Consultations, 14 July, 1756.*

No. 95, No. 96, and No. 97, from the Honourable Roger Drake, Esq., President and Governour &c. Council of Fort William, the first dated the 25th of May. . . .

That by the advices they received from our Honourable Masters by the *Delawar* they have great reason to apprehend a war, and it being recommended to them to be upon their guard, they think it incumbent on them to represent to us the weak state of their garrison, occasioned chiefly by our detaining the recruits designed them for several years past, amounting to 663 as *per* list now sent us, that it is highly necessary we should send them as large a re-inforcement as we can possibly spare and also some musquets which they are in great want of. . . . That their Nabob Allyverdi Cawn is demised and is succeeded by his adopted son Seer Raja Dowlat. . . . The second dated the 4th June acquainting us that since the date of their last they had been and are still involved in

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

a dispute with the country Government occasioned by the Nabob's taking umbrage at their repairing and strengthening their line of guns towards the river, and that by letters from Cossimbuzar, copies of which they send us, they are afraid matters will be carried to extremities, the Nabob having stationed a party of horsemen round that factory and seeming much exasperated. That should they be attacked they are resolved to repel force by force, and to that end desire we will send them as soon as possible all the recruits we have detained from them, or at least a reinforcement of 500 men with a proportionable quantity of arms and stores, which if we neglect doing they deem themselves no ways responsible for what may happen. That they think it adviseable we should communicate this to Admiral Watson. . . .

(*Decided that two Companies be sent to Bengal under command of Major Kilpatrick.*)

57. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council at Fulta, dated Chandernagore,* 14 *July,* 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—We have received your letter or protest dated the 13th of July 1756 and are surprized you should protest against us for all damages and wrongs which may ensue by the deprivation of our privileges as contained in the royal *phirmaund* when we think we can with more propriety say that the majority of you, gentlemen, deprived our Honourable Masters of their priviledges as contained in the royal *phirmaund* when you incensed the Nabob to come against Calcutta and then deserted the place and fled on board your ships, which in all probability and by all accounts was the occasion of the loss of the place which might have been defended if you had staid, and by which step we are of opinion you abdicated your several stations and are now no longer to be deemed Servants of the Company; but setting the above aside if we thought it had been for our Honourable Masters' interest we should not have hesitated a moment getting the letters translated and delivered; but if you at this time look on yourselves as a Governour and Council you must of course allow us our stations, in consequence of which we are persuaded we have a right to dissent and make our representations against any of your measures which we think contrary to the interest of our

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Employers as an application at present we are of opinion is, and that it would be more adviseable to wait to see what steps the Governour and Council of Madrass may be able to take to reestablish the Company's affairs and credit in Bengal, we having advised them of the taking of Calcutta the 3rd instant by express *cossids*. Therefore we think an application will be more efficacious and made with a better grace when any force arrives from thence than it can at present. Whereas should the Nabob now permit you to return into a ruined and defenceless town it may be with an intent to replunder the place and secure your persons, for we are of opinion the Nabob is not to be trusted after things have gone the length they have; and as a further reason to imagine that your return may be attended with a risque is the harsh and inveterate manner in which the Nabob has expressed himself against Mr. Drake.

We are credibly informed that when you wrote us you made application to those who had more interest and power to give weight to your proposals than we, who by great intercession had but just obtained our liberty. On our coming to the knowledge of this, our intermedling we thought might have been rather hurtful than any ways of service, however if after the reasons we have given you are still of opinion that the letters you sent us ought to be translated and delivered we shall, agreable to your desire, get them done and send them to the respective persons directed, except Golam Hossein Cawn who is turned out of the province. We have no power or interest of our own to make applications; if we had we should certainly have before made use of it for the service of our Honourable Employers.

We are, &c., &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

58. *Notification to the Honourable Company's Covenanted Servants on board the fleet.*

GENTLEMEN,—I am ordered by the Agents for the Honourable Company's affairs, to inform you that they do not think you have forfeited your title to the Company's service by the loss of Calcutta and its dependencies, as our establishment is not absolutely disolved by this capture and as a prospect still remains of being able to recover our Settlement.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

I am therefore further directed to acquaint you that your diet money and salary will be continued as usual, and will be discharged by Roger Drake Esq. upon a tender of your bills.

I am, Gentlemen, your most obedient servant,

Signed JOHN COOKE *Secretary.*

Sloop 'Syren,'
the 14th July, 1756.

59. *Extract from Fort Saint George Select Committee Consultations, 14 July*, 1756.

The President acquaints the Committee that upon intelligence received last night from the Governor and Council of Fort William of dangerous disturbances raised in Bengal by the new Nabob, it was resolved in Council this morning to send thither a re-inforcement of 200 men under the command of Major Killpatrick.

60. *Letter from Mr. Roger Drake to Council Fort Saint George, dated, sloop 'Syren' off Fulta, 14 July*, 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—You must naturally conclude the mind cannot recover itself, in our present situation, to transmit you such a narration of the event passed by the capture of Calcutta by the Moors, as the circumstances thereof require to be penned with impartiallity, which shall be my strictest endeavours to set forth, when I am eased of the anxiety my station has drawn on me: I am therefore now to entreat your conclusions on my conduct may be suspended untill the motives, actions and reasons for such our conduct are impartially set forth.

I am, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR.

61. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Court of Directors, dated, Chandernagore, 16 July*, 1756.[1]

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURS,—It is with the utmost concern we now inform you that Fort William was taken the 20th of June by the Nabob of Bengal, grandson of Alli Verdi Cawn who died last April. The first rise of these troubles are as follows.

[1] Orme MSS., India VII., pp. 1802-8. Under date 3 July, which must be wrong, as the letter refers to a letter of the 6th July from Messrs. Drake and Council at Fulta.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Some time after his coming to the government he sent one Narran Sing, brother to Rogeram, who is Nabob of Cuttack and commander of the spys (which in this country is a considerable post) to Calcutta where he arrived privately and in disguise with a letter from the Nabob to the Governor, which the Governor did not think proper to receive as it was presented in such a way, but turned Narran Sing with disgrace out of the place. The Chief of Cossimbuzar being apprehensive that this might occasion some trouble wrote to the *Durbar* officers to prevent any complaint being made to the Nabob, and the affair was seemingly hushed up, but few days were elapsed when he sent for our *vacqueel* and told him he heard they were making fortifications and digging a ditch round Calcutta, and insisted that we should level our new works and fill up the ditch. Upon the *vacqueel's* returning from the *Durbar*, and acquainting the Chief with what the Nabob said, he wrote to him that he had not heard of any new fortifications being raised or ditch dug, and that we were apprehensive that our enemies for their own lucrative advantages had raised these reports. To this letter he returned no answer, but sent a *perwannah* to Calcutta ordering them to desist from fortifying, and to level what new works they had begun. He then marched to the northward and gave out he was going to Patna.[1] On his arrival at Rajamaul he received the Governour's answer, at which he was greatly incensed, and immediately ordered a party of horse and gun men upon our factory, and returned back himself with the greatest expedition, with his whole army, which encamped round our factory, and according to the most moderate computation consisted of 10,000 horse and 20,000 Rajepouts and other gun men with a large train of artillery, and then demanded the Chief to come out and see him, the Nabob's *duan* who commanded the van of the army writing the Chief a letter, that he might come out with great safety, that no harm should happen, and that he would introduce him to the Nabob. Upon this we thought proper to send the surgeon of the factory to the *duan*, and he gave him the same assurances, and sent him back with a considerable person, and a present of *beetle* (which is esteemed a pledge of

[1] Mistake for Purneah.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

faith), to accompany the Chief to the *duan* who was to introduce him to the Nabob. Accordingly agreeable to the unanimous opinion of the gentlemen of the factory and officer of the garrison, the Chief went and was presented by the *duan* to the Nabob, who immediately ordered him into confinement, and insisted on his giving an obligation that in 15 days time the gentlemen of Calcutta should level what new works they had raised, deliver up the Nabob's tenants who had fled for protection there, and that if it could be proved we had falsified the Company's *dustucks* by giving them to those that had no right to them, we should pay back what the Government had suffered by loss of Duties. The Chief being in their hands was obliged to sign this. They then told him that his signing was of no consequence without the rest of the Council; accordingly upon the surgeon's returning to the factory with a eunuch of the Nabob's and two or three others, who acquainted Messrs. Collet and Batson that it was necessary they should go to the Chief and make an end of the affair, they went and were detained prisoners, nothing more being said about the obligation the Chief had signed. The next day we were ordered to deliver up our ammunition and cannon, which upon mature deliberation we thought proper to comply with, in hopes to entirely pacify the Nabob and prevent his march to Calcutta. The army then drew off from the factory. Mr. Batson was sent back to the factory, and Messrs. Watts and Collet kept prisoners in the camp. The Nabob then bent his march towards Calcutta, having ordered all the *godowns* at Cossimbuzar to be sealed with his seal, and the soldiers to be carried prisoners to Muxadavad.

As the Chief &c. going out of the factory, and afterwards delivering up the cannon and ammunition, may perhaps appear to Your Honours extraordinary, we think it necessary to give our reasons for taking such steps. It has been always customary in Bengal for the chiefs of Subordinates to visit the Nabobs of the province, and we had great reason to believe that on paying this visit we should be able to accommodate matters and prevent his march to Calcutta. Had we attempted to resist our factory must inevitably have fallen into their hands, we being in no condition to make a defence against so large a force: our factory being

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

surrounded on three sides by houses which overlooked our bastions, some not 30 yards from our bastions: most of our guns were honeycombed and carriages rotten though we had repeatedly indented to Calcutta for new ones. Our garrison consisted of about 50 soldiers, most of which were Portugeese. We had about 80 *maunds* of powder but few or no shot or granades. We might possibly with this force have held out 3 or 4 days, which would not have prevented the consequences that have since happened, but even supposing we had been able to resist the Government we are humbly of opinion it would have been madness in us to have attempted it when so great a part of Your Honours' estate amounting to many *lacks* of rupees was dispersed over the whole country which would have been immediately seized and you might justly have blamed us for commencing a war with the Government and being the occasion of so immense a loss; the effects in our factory not being near so considerable as the money, goods, and debts we had outstanding; all which with the money and goods at the several *aurungs* would have been saved had the Governour and Council thought proper to come to any terms with the Nabob. We therefore hope (though unfortunate) Your Honours will approve off and think the steps we took the most prudent, though by unthinking men who see affairs but in one light we may possibly be blamed.

The best account we can get of the taking Fort William, we being then prisoners in the camp, is that two days before the place was delivered up the Governour, Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, and Mackett with the Commandant, George Minchin, Captain Alexander Grant, and 8 or 9 of the junior servants with part of the military quitted the fort and retired on board their ships, but with such precipitation that we heard they have saved nothing belonging to the Company not even their books and papers or *Mogul's phirmaund*. Messrs. Pearkes, Hollwell, Eyre and Baillie with the rest of the Company's servants and military remained in the fort. But when the Governour, &c., were gone, the soldiers got to their liquors and wine under no command. Fifty-six of the soldiers that were Dutch deserted that night, after which all was tumult, disorder and confusion which we imagine occasioned the gentlemen to hoist a flag of truce in order to capitulate. This opportunity the Moors took to rush in upon them, applied ladders to the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

walls which they scaled and were soon in possession of the fort. Most of the gentlemen, officers and soldiers were carried prisoners to the Nabob, who ordered them into the Black Hole where out of 146 one hundred and twenty three were found dead the next morning, supposed to be suffocated by the closeness of the place. Messrs. Holwell, Court, Burdet, and Walcot an ensign were put in irons and carried prisoners to Muxadavad, of whom we have since heard nothing. We are persuaded this dismal catastrophey of Your Honours' estate in Bengal being plundered, your Settlements lost, your servants destroyed and ruined with some hundred thousands of Calcutta inhabitants might have been prevented had the Governour and Council thought proper to have compromised matters for a sum of money. And as a proof, the Nabob touched nothing at Cossimbuzar but the warlike stores or at any of the other factorys or *aurungs* till he had taken Calcutta. Roydulub, the Nabob's *duan* and who commanded the van of the army likewise frequently sent for the Chief, while he was prisoner in the camp, and told him smiling that we must pay a *crore* of rupees, and when the Chief assured him the Company's whole estate did not amount to that sum he then asked him if they would pay 20 *lacks* of rupees, to which the Chief answered again that the Company's annual trade to Bengal was not more than the demand he made. The *duan* then desired to know what they could afford to pay, to which he replyed he had no powers to treat, but if the *duan* would permit him to write to Calcutta he should then be able to inform him. This request the *duan* absolutely refused, but told him if any proposals of accommodation were made first from Calcutta he might then write as often as he pleased. We being surrounded and strictly watched night and day by the Nabob's people, we had no opportunity of writing to Calcutta till we were opposite to Hughly, where we got permission to write to the Dutch Director for some provisions, to whom we sent a letter to be forwarded to Calcutta wherein we wrote that if the Governour and Council would send a proper person to the camp or empower us to act, we flattered ourselves that even then the dispute with the Nabob might be finished for a sum of money. This letter the Dutch Director assures us was delivered to Mr. Drake along with a letter of his own, and we are well informed an answer was wrote,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

importing that after the disgrace the Company had suffered at Cossimbuzar by the taking of their factory and imprisoning their servants, they were resolved not to come to any agreement.

Coja Wazeed, a considerable merchant and one who has great influence with the Nabob, his *duan* also told us that he was sent by his master four times to Calcutta to persuade the gentlemen to pay a sum of money and pacify the Nabob, but without effect, and the last time was threatened to be used ill if he came again on the same errand; from the above proofs there appears to us the greatest moral certainty that the Nabob never intended to drive the English out of his province but would have been satisfied with a sum of money. His treatment of the French and Dutch after the taking of Calcutta is a corroboratory circumstance; of each of whom he at first demanded twenty *lacks* of rupees, and on their representing to him that their trade in his province did not amount to that sum but that they were willing to make the present which was usually given on a *Subah's* first coming to the Government, he appeared so incensed that he ordered ten thousand men into the Dutch Town with directions to demolish and plunder the houses and people on the first signal. He then demanded their guns, ammunition and colours but was at last pacifyed with a present of four hundred and fifty thousand *sicca* rupees. The French were threatened and treated much in the same manner, and were obliged to pay three hundred thousand *siccas;* this account we can affirm to be true as we had it from the gentlemen themselves.

We are informed that Mr. Richard Becher, Chief, &c., Council at Dacca were surrounded by the Nabob's forces and obliged to surrender themselves prisoners and are now in the French factory there, the French Chief having passed his word for their appearance, all the Company's effects and money being seized for the Nabob's use.

Mr. Peter Amyatt, Chief at Luckypore, escaped on board a sloop and has saved about 60,000 rupees in money and goods of Your Honours' estate. Mr. Thomas Boddam has likewise saved from Ballasore about 6,000 rupees. They are now with Mr. Drake and the rest of the gentlemen, who are on board country ships at Fultah.

Enclosed is a letter from Mr. Drake and the gentlemen below

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

with our answer. We did not think it adviseable to act as we were of opinion that the gentlemen who had deserted the fort had by that step abdicated their several stations in the Company's service and had not power to indemnify us if Your Honours should not approve of the measures they might direct us to take, and we are of opinion that as they had wrote to the Governour and Council of Madrass for assistance, and as we had since wrote an account of the taking of Calcutta, we think it more adviseable to wait till we have answers from Madrass, and are informed what measures the Governour and Council there may be able to take to re-establish the Honourable Company's affairs in Bengal, then meanly to return into a ruined and open town which the Nabob may possibly consent to in hopes of still further plunder on the arrival of any of Your Honours' ships, as we think he is not to be trusted after affairs have gone the lengths they have.

Enclosed is a translate of the Nabob's letter to the Honourable George Pigot, Esq., on which we must beg leave to remark that the Chief of Cossimbuzar wrote a letter to the Nabob that he was persuaded Mr. Drake would deliver up Rojebullub's son and wealth, who is the person the Nabob means in his letter, whenever he thought proper to demand him, at which as the Chief was assured from Coja Wazeed who delivered the letter that the Nabob seemed then satisfied. Whether the Nabob applied afterwards to Calcutta for the delivery of this man we cannot say.

Since writing the above Mr. Gray Junior one of Your Honours' servants has given us an account of the attack and taking of Calcutta, he being present the whole time, which we now enclose; and here we must beg leave to inform Your Honours that Mr. William Mackett's intentions was not to leave the fort, but his wife having miscarried the night before, he thought it incumbent on him to see her safe on board a ship, when he wanted to return but could get no conveyance though we are informed he offered a thousand rupees for a boat. Enclosed is an account of the Company's servants and officers on board the ships at Fultah.

We have since the above received another letter from the gentlemen at Fultah which we now enclose with our answer thereto. We hope Your Honours will not blame our conduct in this affair,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

as what we have done was to the best of our judgment and we flatter ourselves their protest will have no weight with Your Honours, as we think they may with more propriety be charged with what damages and wrongs both have and may ensue by the deprivation of the Company's privileges as contained in the royal *phirmaund*. And we are of opinion that the immediate possession of Calcutta in its present ruined condition can be of no service to the Company, neither do we think it adviseable or safe to trust any of the Company's effects there till a sufficient force arrives to defend the place against the Nabob in case he should think proper to attack it again, we being of opinion as we mentioned before that no trust or confidence can be reposed in him.

We were released by the Nabob at Hughly on his return from the taking of Calcutta, and were delivered to the French Governour of Chandernagore, from whom the Nabob took a receipt for us, and ordered him to send us safe to Madrass. We have received here the most humane treatment, and have now 110 soldiers and sailors in their hospital who are all supplied with diet and cloathing.

We assure Your Honours that the above account relating to ourselves and our transactions is in every particular true and just, and what regards the taking of Calcutta is from the best information we could get, in which we have taken particular care not to be deceived or biassed by favour or prejudice. We hope from your candour that you will make allowances for us as men and consequently falliable for any errors in judgment we may have committed. We being conscious of having acted as faithful servants, what we thought most for the interest of the Honourable Company, therefore flatter ourselves we shall meet with your future favour, we being entirely ruined, having lost every thing even to our cloaths and necessarys.

We are &c. &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

62. *Account of the loss of Calcutta by Mr. Grey, Junior, June*, 1756.

On the 17th of June the enemy attacked the redoubt at Perrins about noon, and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon 40 men with 2 field pieces were sent to the assistance of that place, where in the engagement the Moors from behind the trees and bushes killed 2

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Europeans, one of whom was Ralph Thoresby. About 8 o'clock an 18 pounder came out to Perrins, and the 2 field pieces with the reinforcement that had been sent in the afternoon went back to their former stations. In the night, Lieutenant Pacard, who had the command at Perrins, sallied out upon the enemy, and having drove them from their guns spiked up 4 of them and brought away some ammunition.

On the 18th about 9 o'clock in the morning our outworks were attacked. Small parties were dispatched to the tops of some of the highest houses, from thence to annoy the enemy on their approach. Amongst those Messrs. Charles Smith and Robert Wilkinson had the misfortune to be killed. Monsieur La Bonne, who with a small party was posted at the Jail, bravely defended it for six hours, till himself and most of his men being wounded, they were obliged to retire within the battery at the Court House. In the evening the enemy killing and wounding several of our men, and surrounding us on all sides, we were ordered to retreat from our outworks (after having spiked up our guns) and take possession of the Church, Mr. Cruttenden's, Eyres, and the Company's Houses, which we quietly kept all night.

The enemy, on the morning of the 19th advanced upon us, and still surrounding us killed and wounded some of our men; we were ordered to retire from the Church and houses we had taken possession of the night before and come within the fort. The ladies and wounded men were sent on board the ships. The Governour, Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, Macket, Commandant Minchin, Captain Alexander Grant, Messrs Cruttenden, Mapletoft, Sommer, Billers, O'Hara, Rider, Tooke, Senior, Ellis, Vassmer, Orr, Leycester, Charlton, with severals of the military and militia fled on board the ships and went down the river, which greatly dispirited our men. Immediately upon the Governour's going off Mr. Holwell was unanimously chosen in his room (Mr. Pearkes who was his senior in Council delivering him up the charge of the factory till the troubles should cease). The new Governour made a publick declaration of his detesting Mr. Drake's base flight, at the same time encouraging the military to hold out the siege with a promise of 3 chests of the Company's treasure containing 24,000 rupees among them if they could keep the place.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

But upon so many of the principal officers leaving us, the souldiers could not be hindered from breaking into the rooms of those that were gone, and taking from thence what wine or spirits came in their way, by which getting drunk they began to be mutinous and unruly. In the night a corporal and 56 men, most of them Dutch, deserted us and went over the walls to the enemy.

Next morning the enemy having got possession of the top of the Church and houses round the fort, from thence galled our men with their small arms, killing several of them (among whom was Captain Smith) and wounding many of our officers. The Church commanded our walls in such a manner that the men could not stand to their guns, and the officers were obliged to go about and present cocked pistols at the souldiers to make them mount the walls which were almost deserted; but they, whenever they were out of sight, skulked and would not go up. About noon the Governour and Council thought it proper to write to the Nabob and *duan*, demanding a truce and accommodation, but had no answer returned. The ship *Prince George* which had hiterto layn before Perrins (from whence our forces had been sometime withdrawn) was ordered down abreast of the fort, but in the way unluckily ran ashore by the misconduct of the pilot Francis Morris and was taken by the Moors. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the enemy called out to us not to fire, in consequence of which the Governour showed a flag of truce, and gave orders for us not to fire, upon which the enemy in vast numbers came under our walls, and at once set fire to the windows which were stopt up with cotton bales, began to break open the Fort Gate, and scaled our walls on all sides. This put us in the utmost confusion. Some rushed out at the gate towards the river to take possession of a boat that lay half in and half out of the water, and in an instant it was so laden that it was impossible to get it off. In the meantime the Moors surrounded and shewed them signs of quarter, upon which they delivered themselves up. Some of them went to the Nabob himself and were by him pardoned, and others whilst the enemy were busy about the plunder got into a boat and went down the river to the ships at that time lying off Surmon's Gardens. But most of those that remained in the fort were put into the Black Hole to the number of 146, of whom 123 were miserably

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

suffocated by the heat, occasioned by so many being shut up in so small a place. Among those that unhappily suffered, were Messrs Eyres, Baillie, Coales, Dumbleton, Jenks, Reveley, Law, Jebb, Carse, Valicourt, Bellamy Senior, Drake, Byng, Dalrymple, P. Johnston, Street, Stephen and Edward Page, Grub, Dod, Torriano, Knapton, Ballard, Captains Clayton, Witherington, Buchanan, Lieutenants Hays, Simpson, Blagg, Bishop, Pacard, Bellamy, Ensigns Scott and Wedderburn. Among those that had been in the Black Hole, but came out alive, were Messrs Holwell, Court, Burdett, and Ensign Walcot who were sent up to Muxidavad in irons, and Messrs Cooke and Lushington who got down to the ships.

At the time the fort was taken there was not above the number of 20 men upon the walls. The greatest part of the souldiers were drunk, and those that were sober were quite fatigued with continual hard duty, and want of a regular distribution of provisions.

63. *Duplicate letters from Mr. J. Z. Holwell to Councils, Bombay and Fort Saint George, dated, Muxadavad, 17 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—Little capable as I am in my distressed situation of executing a task of this kind it yet cannot be neglected, consistent with my duty to my Honourable Employers, and the trust last devolved on me at their Settlement of Fort William, now theirs no more, an incident I doubt not but you have before this been advised off, by *pattamars* from this city and possibly by our late President from Ingillee. This conjecture however will not excuse my omitting to transmit you under general heads the several gradations by which our Honourable Masters have sustained this important loss. These I am to request you will forward to them by the most expeditious conveyance in your power, whilst I refer them and you to a particular and distinct narrative of the causes and various accidents which have contributed to our fatal catastrophe in these provinces which I will attempt as soon as the recovery of my health (now much impaired) will enable me.

Our factory at Cossimbuzar being given up to the Nabob the 4th of June last (by the most unhappy and unaccountable infatua-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

tion in our Chief and Council there) the foundation of our ruin was laid; the accession was too great to the Nabob to be relinquished and he was sensible he must relinquish it, as well as restore our money and goods seized at the different *aurungs* or entirely extirpate us from the provinces. The cannon, ammunition, and military stores he became possessed of at Cossimbuzar determined him to the latter, and as he expected some succours might reach us from the Coast, he marched against us with the whole force of his provinces, consisting by the best accounts we have since acquired of 30,000 horse and 35,000 foot with about 400 elephants of war, though our best information during his approach made his force no more than 6 or 7000 horse and 12 or 15,000 foot, nor could we ever learn with any certainty whether the Nabob marched against us in person or not, for he had cut off all communication between us and the gentlemen of Cossimbuzar (whom with the garrison he made prisoners) and our spys either had not courage enough to approach his army for any just intelligence, or not integrity enough to give it us. On the earliest notice of his real intentions, we made all the dispositions in our power for his reception,—though I believe never was fortress less defensible, encumbered with houses close round us, and not a proper esplanade for our guns,[1] nor time possibly to pull the houses down to remedy this evil; advanced posts were appointed, ditches sunk, breastwork thrown up and (advanced) batteries raised at three principal posts to wit, at the Court House eastward, at the corner of (Mr.) Griffith's house[2] to the northward, and at Mrs. Piearces Bridge to the southward and the Jail was fortified as a further advanced post,—We had flattered ourselves that we should have mustered between 5 [or] 600 effective men Europeans, blacks, and militia, inhabitants and those belonging to the shipping, but to our utter astonishment when our military roll was returned in Council it consisted only of 45 of the Train and 145 infantry and in both only 60

[1] Here follows in Fort Saint George letter: 'No ditch, no glacis, a ravelin half finished that did no more disservice than service, a number of lanes and avenues opening within less than half-musket-shot of our fort. To remedy these evils advanced posts were,' etc.

[2] Across the ditch, at the corner of Hastings and Council House Streets.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Europeans; in the militia were about 100 Armenians who were entirely useless, and more than that number amongst the black militia boys and slaves, who were not capable of holding a musket; so that in fact when the seafaring people, who most of them appeared only at the first muster, were draughted off on board the vessels (of which we had in port about 30 sail of every craft at least) our garrison did not consist of 250 fighting men, officers included.

On the 7th June all provisions were prohibited by the Nabob being brought into Calcutta by orders to the several *zemindars* round us and the other side of the river. Between the 10th and 13th June several partys of the Nabob's troops took possession of Tanners Fort, to cut off our communication on the river from below,—on the 14th, 3 or 4 ships were sent to dislodge them without effect,—on the 16th Baagbazar Redoubt was attacked by the Nabob's army who were repulsed with considerable loss to them by [Lieutenant Blagg] and Ensign Piccard and 25 men with 30 *buckserries*. Here two European soldiers were killed and Mr. Ralph Thoresby, a hopefull young gentleman who with many others of the junior servants had entered volunteers in the infantry. About this time two Moors ships were brought under our guns which by way of reprisal we had taken below. On the 17th all our *buckseries* to the number of near 700, taken the most of them into our pay on this occasion, fled to a man from our out-*chowkeys* and I believe deserted to the enemy. Early this day our principal post to the northward by Mr. Griffiths' was attacked and something later that at the Court House by flying parties from the streets and houses, whilst a multitude of other detached partys from the Nabob's army were plundering and destroying every part of the town to the northward. These two advanced posts were continually alarmed and harrassed this whole day and the succeeding night and day, that is to say the 18th when the enemy brought a twelve pounder supported with about 5,000 musketry to bear against the Jail which was gallantly defended by a French officer Monsieur Le Beaume with Ensign Carstairs and 32 men detached from the advanced post at the Court House and maintained untill about noon when Monsieur Le Beaume and Ensign Carstairs being wounded, some of the Train killed and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

others of the detachment disabled the post was relinquished and one field piece brought off with the party; about four afternoon the enemy having taken possession of the houses all round the advanced post at the Court House it was ordered to be abandoned, and the same evening the like orders were sent to the other two posts to the southward and northward and Piccard's party called from Baagbuzar; this evening at a council of war it was resolved to embark the Company's treasure, books and the European ladies and further agreed that the ships should remain under the guns of the fort. Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, the first Colonel and the other Lieutenant Colonel of the militia, conducted the ladies on board and I understood were to return, when they had reconciled the ladies to their situation; but they never returned again, no more did Captain Lieutenant Mapletoft, Lieutenant H. Wedderburn, Ensigns William Sumner, Charles Douglas and Robert Halsey Baldrick, all officers of the militia, besides about 15 of the volunteers and many of the militia who deserted the fort this day and the succeeding morning. On the 18th more advanced in the night, we held another council of war and the Captain of the Train being ordered to make a return of the ammunition, we were thunderstruck when he reported there was not full three days ammunition in the garrison. The debate then turned on the question whether a retreat with the garrison and all the Company's effects could be attempted that night, but so much of it elapsed in debate that it became impracticable untill the next, when myself, and I believe every body else present, judged the retreat was determined to be carried into execution. In the morning of the 19th the enemy were pretty quiet and only now and then threw a random shot at the fort from the batteries they had raised in three or four different stations whilst they were busy in forming lodgements in the houses round us. About 9 this morning our President Mr. Drake, Commandant Minchin, Mr. Macket 2nd Captain of the militia, Captain Grant, Adjutant General, Mr. O'Hara Lieutenant of the Train, privately withdraw out of the back gate, deserted the factory and embarked on board the shipping, which immediately weighed and stood down the river without leaving us a single boat at the *got* or possibility of making a general retreat and this before any one attack had

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

been actually made on the fort. On the Governour etc.'s desertion being known the garrison fell into the utmost confusion and tumults, when the gentlemen remaining of the Council, officers and others, entreated I would immediately take upon me the government of the fort, as the only means of quieting the present tumults which must have ended in the destruction of the whole. A council was directly called and Mr. Pearkes, waving his right of seniority, himself, Messrs. Eyre and Baillie appointed me governour of the fort and administrator of the Honourable Company's affairs during the troubles, in which light I was recognized by the whole garrison. I immediately visited every post and soon quieted the minds of the people, by assuring them they should have three chests of treasure divided amongst the soldiers and militia, if they would defend the fort untill we could make a general retreat with all the Company's effects and that I would be the last man that quitted the fort. At the council held as above, we suspended the President and the gentlemen of the Council and officers with him from the Company's service, it being the only just piece of resentment in our power, for the cruel piece of treachery they had been guilty of to the whole garrison as well as breach of trust to their Employers. We likewise sent an order to Captain Hague, Commander of the Company's ship *Saint George* stationed at Baagbazar to weigh and immediately drop down opposite the lane between the new *godowns*[1] of the factory and the Company's House: these new *godowns* being the weakest part of the fort and not flanked by any gun from it, the ship in this station would have accomplished this service, have contributed to dislodge the enemy from the Company's House, and have been under our guns. As she was then the only remaining chance we had for a general retreat, 3 or 4 boats being yet with her, Mr. Pearkes was so obliging as to tender himself with three or four volunteers on this service and went on board accordingly, but the pilot neither that day nor the next would undertake to bring her lower than opposite to Mr. Watts's house where she was useless to us. To return to our situation the 19th after the President's desertion from Council I had hardly gone round the ramparts before the enemy attacked

[1] Warehouses.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the fort incessantly the whole remainder of the day from their batteries and small arms; of the former from the battery we had raised at the Court House, from another they had erected in Mr. Allsop's Compound[1] between the Court House and the jail, from a third erected at the south-west corner of the Park, from a fourth in the Reverend Mr. Bellamy's Compound and from a small battery they had raised at the Dock Head. They fired so wildly from their batteries they would not have made a breach in a twelve month though they fired from 18 pounders, but their small arms from the houses round us, particularly the Company's, Captain Rannie's and Mr. Cruttenden's, annoyed us much, from whence we several times dislodged them with great slaughter and obliged them at last to set fire to them and to abandon them. The 19th at night our people had some recess but were obliged to sleep on their arms. The 20th in the morning the enemy formed three assaults at once against the north-west bastion, against the north-west *futtock*[2] or barrier, and against the windows of the labratory on the eastern curtain, and attempted to scale to the north-westward. From each of these assaults they were beat off with great loss to them before noon and a general cessation in a manner ensued for some hours, when finding we had 25 killed and 70 or more of our best men wounded and our Train killed, wounded and deserted to all but 14, and not two hours ammunition left, we threw out a flag of truce towards the evening, intending to amuse the enemy and make the best retreat we could in the night to the *Saint George*, not then knowing that she was on a sand opposite to Omichund's house. During the parley our back gate was betrayed to the enemy in concert—I judge—with some that had deserted the preceeding night from the walls and those who had the guard of that gate, who were obliged to wrench off the locks and bolts, the keys being in my possession. In this situation we had nothing left to resolve on but a surrender at discretion.

Thus I have transmitted to your Honour etc. as circumstantial an account of this melancholy event as my state of body and mind will at present permit me, (ruined in my own private fortune as well as much injured in constitution) of both having barely strength to hold the pen a yet necessary period whilst I advise

[1] The enclosure round a house. [2] A gate.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

you that of the enemy we killed first and last by their own confession 5000 of their troops and 80 *jemidars* and officers of consequence exclusive of the wounded. The resistance we made and the loss they suffered so irritated the Nabob that he ordered myself and all the prisoners promiscuously to the number of about 165 or 170 to be crammed altogether into a small prison in the fort called the Black Hole, from whence only about 16 of us came out alive in the morning the rest being suffocated to death—amongst those myself, Mr. Richard Court, Mr. John Cooke, Mr. Lushington, Ensign Walcot, Mr. Burdett (a young gentleman volunteer), Captain Mills, Captain Dickson, and about 7 or 8 soldiers blacks and whites; amongst the dead Messrs. Eyre and William Baillie, the Reverend Mr. Bellamy, Messrs. Jenks, Rively, Law, T. Coales etc. our 3 Military Captains and 9 Subalterns, many of our volunteers and inhabitants, of whom particular lists shall be forwarded the Honourable Company as recollection enables me. Myself, Messrs. Court, Walcot and Burdet were sent to the camp the 21st in the morning, there put in irons and marched three miles to town the 22nd, in the sun and our irons, with no covering to our heads, and hardly any to our bodies. At the Dock Head we were detained the 22nd, 23rd and 24th, and the evening of that day put on board an open boat for this city destitute of a rupee or any necessary of life. On the 7th instant we arrived there (our subsistence on the way up on rice and water) and were deposited under a guard in an open stinking cowhouse, a spectacle to the whole city (and hardly escaped a second smothering), untill the 11th when we were removed to the *jemidar's* house under whose custody we were. On the 15th we were again remanded to the cowhouse, flattered with hopes of knowing our ultimate fate, there we remained that night and yesterday [had our fetters struck off and] were once again blessed with liberty and freedom to go where we pleased. The humanity and friendship we received here from the gentlemen of the French and Dutch factorys will ever require our most grateful remembrance.

It only remains that I inform your Honour etc., that at the first approach of the troubles we wrote to Chandanagore and Hughley to join us in a cause we deemed common, and pressed their assistance with men and ammunition, the answer we

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

received from Hugley was that they were ordered by their Principals to remain neuter in all disputes of this kind with the Government. From Chandanagore the answer was more favourable but of equal utility to us, for when we pressed them for ships and ammunition they genteelly refused us and pleaded their own weakness. Neither were we deficient in writing letter after letter to the Nabob, making him every concession in our power, of which he took not the least notice nor returned one answer.

Your Honour etc., have heard of the sufferings of the gentlemen with me which alone entitles them to the Honourable Company's favour, but I should do great injustice to Messrs. Court and Walcot if I omitted mentioning them in the particular manner they merit, the former the only officer of the Militia and the other the only one of the Military alive who did not desert their Colours, The former has distinguished himself as a faithfull Covenant Servant and both as gallant officers. Dacca Factory is given up, but Luckipore received timely advice to withdraw and have I hear joined the President at Ingellie.

I am etc., J. *Z.* HOLWELL.

P.S. Our intentions are to quit this city to-morrow, to proceed on board any ship we find at Culpee and take the first opportunity for the coast of Coromandel.

64. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Court of Directors, dated Chandernagore, 17 July, 1756.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURS,—1. Since the conclusion of our letter we were apprehensive that we might be misinformed in regard to the Governour and Council's not making any proposals to the Nabob for an accommodation, Mr. Watts therefore went to see Seree Babboo, Coja Wazeed's *duan* at Chinchura, and enquired of him what he knew of the matter, to which he replyed that he was down several times in Calcutta, and that the last time he was there he told the Governour the Nabob was marching down, to which he answered that the sooner he came the better, and that he would make another Nabob, with other harsh expressions he was ashamed to mention. When the Nabob was at Rannah Ghat, which is about two days march from Hughley, Coja Wazeed his master wrote him immediately to go to Calcutta,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

that he went as far as Bamagur,[1] but there received a message from his *gomastah* in Calcutta not by any means to proceed, for Ommichund was confined, and he would be so likewise on his arrival, on which advice he returned to Hughley, that when the Nabob was at Banhabazar,[2] Seree Babboo was in the camp from whence he wrote to Mr. Drake enclosing the form of a letter to the Nabob for the Governour to get wrote fair and sign, which the Governour accordingly did, but this letter did not arrive till the Nabob was at Mr. Kellsall's Gardens and hostilities had been then commenced at Tanais Fort, &c.; Seree Babboo delivered the letter but it was too late, and the Nabob then too incensed to reply to it.

2. Seree Babboo also informed Mr. Watts that Mr. Drake &c. at Fulta had wrote to Mr. Bisdom, the Dutch Directore at Chinchura, and enclosed hm letters for Coja Wazeed, Monickchund, Roy dulub and Golam Hossein Cawn, desiring their interest with the Nabob to be admitted again into Calcutta; upon Mr. Bisdom's receipt of these letters he sent to Coja Wazeed to desire a conference to which Coja Wazeed answered, that the Nabob might at this time take umbrage at any private meeting, therefore requested he would send some person of trust to him to let him know what he had to impart. Accordingly Mr. Bisdom sent his secretary with the letters for the fore mentioned persons, and who also acquainted Coja Wazeed with the desire the English had of being re-established in Calcutta, to which Coja Wazeed replyed, that as the letters were wrote in English and only signed they would have no force, therefore it was necessary for to have them translated into Persian and sent down to Mr. Drake to have his seal put to them when he would deliver them to the respective people, except Golam Hossein Cawn, who is turned out of the Province. Seree Babboo said he had orders from his Master Coja Wazeed to tell Mr. Watts to write to Mr. Drake that he would deliver his letters agreeable to his desire, but he imagined if the Nabob did so far comply with his request to admit the English into Calcutta, it would not be upon better terms than the Porteguese and Prussians trade on, which is to pay duties and hire houses and ware houses for themselves and goods, he likewise says that we must not expect to be put into possession of Fort William again, and that

[1] Barnagore. [2] Bankibazaar.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Seree Babboo from his master ingenuously told Mr. Watts that the only method to re-establish Calcutta upon creditable terms would be to proceed to Madrass and there concert measures with the Governour and Council, and to return with strength sufficient to enforce any petitions we had to make.

3. We must beg leave to observe here that Coja Wazeed's opinion entirely coincides with what we have already wrote you.

4. We must beg leave further to remark to Your Honours that in our letter to Mr. Drake &c., dated the 8th July, we wrote them as follows 'Had your Honour &c., thought proper to treat before the Nabob reached Calcutta, we are pretty certain a sum of money would have made all easy, prevented the loss of the Settlement and the ruin of many thousands, and we wrote to your Honour &c., to that purpose when we were off Hughley, the only opportunity we had while in the camp, and are informed "the letter came to hand,"' to which in their answer they made no reply, therefore, if they had made any application they should have acquainted us that we were wrongly informed, which as they did not, it appears to us a tacit confession that they made none at least before it was too late.

We are &c. &c. W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

65. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Chandernagore,* 18 *July,* 1756.

Enclosed is a packet for the Honourable the Court of Directors, which we have sent under a flying seal for your perusal, and beg you will close and forward it by the most expeditious conveyance. We likewise send inclosed duplicates of our letters of the 6th and 7th instant to your Honour &c., and are with respect.

W. WATTS AND M. COLLET.

66. *Narrative of the succession of Souragud Dowlet to the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orixa, and of the siege of Calcutta taken by escalade the 20th June,* 1756, *by Governor Drake, dated* 19 *July,* 1756.[1]

Some few years before the death of Alliverdy Cawn the late Nabob which happened the 9th of April 1756, he nominated for

[1] This document is characteristic of the author, whose faults were due as much to confusion of intellect as to any other cause.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

his successor Mirza Mahomed his grandson. The father of Mirza Mahomed was Zunder Mahomed Cawn, the son of Hodjee Hamed Alliverdy Cawn's eldest brother; so that Mirza Mahomed was both great nephew and grandson[1] to the late Nabob, who, having no male heir, Mirza Mahomed was likewise created his adopted son, so that the right of succession would of course have devolved on him though he had not been nominated thereto by his grandfather, on which nomination he assumed the title of Souragud Dowlet.[2]

As soon as the late Nabob was dead Souragud Dowlet found himself engaged with a most powerful enemy who seemed resolved at all events to set up a competitor against him. This competitor was an infant son of Patchy Kouly Cawn[3] the younger brother of Souragud Dowlet's father and who had been adopted by Nowarris Mahomed Cawn the eldest brother of Souragud Dowlet's father. Nowarris Mahomed Cawn and Patchy Kouli Cawn both dying before the late Nabob, the care of this infant devolved to the wife of Nowarris Mahomed Cawn who had amassed immense riches, one of the most powerful engines of war in these eastern parts, and being determined at all adventures to support her ward she drew together a large body of men under the command of Meir Nazzer Alli her reputed gallant, and fortified herself in the large gardens of Moota Ghill within two miles of Muxadavad the capital of the Nabob of Bengal; she had with her for her *duan* and privy councillor one Rajabullub, who had been Nabob of Dacca and esteemed the subtlest politician in the whole province and one whom Souragud Dowlet was determined to draw over to his party if possible or to have him assassinated the first opportunity.

Rajabullub finding himself likely to be engaged in great difficulties resolved, according to the custom of these eastern people when trouble is at hand, to send his son Kissendass who was then at Dacca and great part of his family and wealth out of the province, and grasped the first favourable occasion which offered to order them away under pretence of their making a holy visit to Jaggernaut Pagod; this happened in the lifetime of Alliverdy Cawn, but who then was very infirm, Rajabullub foreseeing the

[1] Siraj-uddaula's mother, Amina Begum, was daughter of Aliverdikhan.

[2] The Lamp of Riches. *Scrafton.*

[3] Or Fazl Kuli Khan.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

perplexed situation he should be brought to when the late Nabob was dead.

On or about the 16th of March a letter arrived from Mr. William Watts, Chief at Cossimbuzar addressed to the President and Mr. Manningham certifying an application having been made to him from Rajabullub requesting we would admit his, Rajabullub's, family into Calcutta for the space of two months until Kissendass his wife was brought to bed and able to proceed on her journey (this Kissendass was son to Rajabullub) and strenuously recommended we would not refuse that request as Rajabullub was likely to hold great posts in the government and might from such favour shewn his family be very instrumental in giving an uninterrupted currency to our business at Dacca and its dependencies, which recommendation from Mr. Watts, who then was so nearly situated to the *Durbar* of the capital city, and whose advice on *Durbar* affairs were seldom contradicted, drew a grant from Mr. Manningham (the Governour being for change of air gone to Ballasore) to admit Kissendass his family and attendants into our bounds, where they peaceably dwelt until some time after the death of Alliverdy Cawn and were furnished with a house from Omichund one of our principal black inhabitants, and if report speaks truth large sums of money and jewels were committed to his, Omichund's care who doubtless thought on his own benefit in shewing any appearance of protection to a family who then was in the highest favour with the government, but transient to appearance was Rajabullub's power or interest immediately after the demise of Alliverdy Cawn; for, previous to any advice arriving from Souragud Dowlet acquainting our Presidency (as has ever been customary on change of government) of his succession to the Nabobship of Muxadavad and its dependencies or sending any reply to the President's letter to him of congratulation thereon and intreating his protection and continuance of favour to the English East India Company, than a *perwannah* arrived on or about the 15th of April demanding as was supposed the immediate delivery of Rajabullub's family and wealth, which *perwannah* was intrusted to Narraindass brother of Rogeram the Nabob's head spy and who stole into Calcutta in disguise, and his first foot ashore was at Omichund's wharf. This step was deemed a very

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

extraordinary proceeding of the Nabob's and that Omichund had fomented it, he having received and read a *perwannah* brought him at the same time tending to this purport; that he was to interest himself in the immediate delivery of Rajabullub's family and wealth to Narraindass. It happened that the Governour and Mr. Manningham were that evening out of town, but too evident it is that Omichund without waiting their return introduced the said Narraindass to Messrs. Pearkes and Holwell, informing those gentlemen of his errand but did not come to acquaint either the President or Mr. Manningham thereof until those gentlemen sent for him, Omichund, the next morning, when on his coming into their presence, where was likewise Mr. Holwell, he seemed strenuous and fearful in his own behalf least his design and intent to serve the government in all respects should by our resolves diminish that power the government thought he held in Calcutta; such was this Omichund's treachery to receive Rajabullub's family in one of his habitations, give them assurance of security, take possession of the most valuable part of their effects and, to conclude all, espouse and solicit obedience to the contents of a *perwannah* we were told demanded the delivery of Rajabullub's sons, family, and wealth into the hands of a person who clandestinely entered the town and was in secret conference with Omichund when the said Omichund was sent for to the factory, and soon after arrived at our back gate the before mentioned Narraindass, concluding as was then thought to be espoused by him with whom he had that instant had discourse. This proceeding was deemed so extravagant that an order was sent to the guard not to admit him into the factory and *peons* were ordered to see that he immediately departed our bounds, which was accordingly done and Mr. Watts was advised thereof in order that by his letters to the principal officers of the *Durbar* any disturbance at this proceeding might be quieted by their pretended attachment to the interest of the English. Mr. Watts accordingly acquainted the principal men of the steps we had taken in regard to a man who under pretence of having a *perwannah* from the Nabob had stole into our bounds, to which representation Mr. Watts advised the President he received for answer that we surely had a right to dismiss such people, and, in that or some other letter to

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the Governour, Mr. Watts expressed that the Company would experience and have the advantages which his intimacy and correspondence with the great people would bring about, and by letters since from him he has inserted [? insisted] that Rajabullub would be taken into favour again and advised the rather showing civility to his family than any ways to distress them; giving his opinion at the same time that we should be cautious and not let them leave Calcutta. As the protection granted Rajabullub's family is imputed to the private act of the President, Messrs. Manningham and Holwell, and the principal cause of drawing the Nabob and his army to Calcutta, it is thought far from needless in this place to assert that the general letter from Cossimbuzar never made mention of Rajabullub or his family or that the Nabob was offended at our treatment of Narraindass. His anger towards us, as in those letters expressed, will hereafter appear in this narration; and though the protection or rather the granting residence to that family was not made a publick act of Council in Calcutta (perhaps from a scruple of injuring Mr. Watts who had recommended that protection and from proceedings of the same nature long before practised by former governors without evil arising therefrom, together with being persuaded that in so arbitrary a government every wealthy man might be drove to seek the same shelter in our other European colonies, and therefore their true interest to hold us blameless on such accounts with the reigning Nabob) yet it is well known the whole gentlemen of Council were assembled that morning by summons and were not unacquainted with the dismission of Narraindass or of the errand he came on, yet neither of them made any objection thereto or spoke of it afterwards as a proceeding they did not assent to; nor can they affirm any restraint has ever been laid on their liberty of dissenting to any act that in their judgments might be prejudicial to the Company's affairs.

We are now arrived to about the 10th of May at which time there was not the least surmise that our business would be impeded or that (as it is now affirmed) the residence of Rajabullub's family in Calcutta had or would give umbrage to the government. It was also much doubted whether Souragud Dowlet could overcome the *Begum's* (wife of Nowarris Mahomed Cawn) forces and those

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of her adherents who had promised her their assistance, she still maintaining herself in Moota Ghill and people were much divided in their sentiments whether the Nabob would be able to establish himself as he had made himself generally odious throughout the province, and was spoke of as a monster of cruelty, making no scruple of committing unparalleled ones [? crimes] in cold blood without provocation. One or two instances shall be mentioned, it was an inquisitiveness in him to know how a child lay in the womb and at his order a woman big with child was ripped up in his presence; another day in sport he ordered a passage[1] boat to be overset that he might be a witness of the struggle men, women and children, make for the safety of their lives in time of danger. From such a cruel disposition little good was to be expected, add hereto his oppressiveness, ambition and being intoxicated with his immense riches and power to commit any extravagancies though tending to the ruin of the whole province, and indeed it was the general wish of all to hear he was cut off, his assassination of Hossim Kouli Cawn, Naib of Dacca[2] and a worthy man, being still ripe in their memories with other unbounded and unjustifiable cruelties by him committed. At the same time he had a great share of personal courage which had recommended him to his army.

Affairs remained so long in suspence between him and the *Begum* that Mr. Watts strenuously recommended in a letter to the Governour to protect Rajabullub's family at all adventures, which had it been the prevailing notion that the Nabob was secure of a quiet establishment in these provinces or Mr. Watts suspecting the Government's anger towards us on that account he surely would never have taken on him to write so peremptorily in those people's favour, however at length with specious promises the *Begum* was prevailed upon to disband her troops and return to her allegiance. But she paid dear for trusting to one of his treacherous disposition, for he no sooner had her in his power than contrary to treaty he stripped her of her immense wealth and cut off Meir Nazzerally who by treaty was likewise to have had a safe convoy out of his

[1] Ferry-boat.

[2] He was the *Naib* or Deputy of Nawajis Muhammad Khan. He lived, however, at Murshidabad, and was there assassinated by Siraj-uddaula. This was the first act of the kind committed by the young Prince.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

province.[1] Aga Bauba youngest son of Suffrage Cawn who was cut off by the late Nabob was at the same time committed to custody and conveyed to Dacca.

Souragud Dowlet having thus settled affairs with the *Begum* to his entire satisfaction, was alarmed with another enemy from the north, the son of Monserally Cawn Vizier to the late *Mogul*, and who had long been promised the dominions usurped by Alliverdy Cawn. The foregoing events caused Monserally's son to march towards Bengal as it is said with 30,000 troops. These tidings dispirited Souragud Dowlet's forces who were marched towards Rajahmall when they declared an averseness to engage with troops imagined to be sent by order of the Grand Mogul to these provinces, therefore the Nabob thought it more prudent to buy them off which it is said he did at a very large expense. From this may be dated his present quiet establishment, when he arrived at Rajahmall about the 17th of May, in these dominions.

On receipt of the Court of Directors' letter *per* ship *Delawar* we were acquainted there was great probability of a war breaking out with France and warning the settlement of Calcutta to be on their guard, workmen were immediately employed to repair and put in order the rampart and line of guns by the waterside; the military storekeeper had orders to prepare and make fit for use gun carriages; a sufficient number of oxen were also procured to work night and day in making of gunpowder, which seeming preparations for war came to the Nabob's ears, who immediately wrote a letter to the Governour requiring that we should not only desist from carrying on any new works but demolish our redoubt and drawbridge at Perrin's and fill up the ditch dug round the town when the Morattoes first invaded the country in the year 1743, and for which work we had thanks from the late Nabob as our town was then an asylum to many of his subjects who brought and sent great riches to be there deposited. This letter was on its receipt communicated to the Council and a reply thereto was prepared and forwarded to Mr. Watts and Council with copy thereof setting forth in substance as follows: 'That it gave us concern to observe that some enemies had advised his Excellency

[1] Mr. Law says Mir Nazar Ali was sent with much of his wealth out of Bengal, and that he went to Delhi, and there tried to form a party.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

without regard to truth that we were erecting new fortifications; That for this century past we had traded in his dominions and had been protected and encouraged by the several *Subahs*,[1] always having paid a due obedience to their orders; That we hoped he would not listen to any false representations, and that we depended on his favour to protect our commerce which tended to the benefit of his provinces, as we exported the produce of the ground in return for bullion brought into the country; That he must have been acquainted of the great loss our Company sustained by the capture of Madrass by the French; That there was now an appearance of another war breaking out between the French nation and ours, wherefore we were repairing our walls which were in danger of being carried away by the river and were not otherways erecting any new works or digging any ditch.' This reply Mr. Watts mentioned to be a very proper one and accordingly forwarded it to the Nabob who was then at Rajahmall, on the perusal of which the gentlemen at Cossimbuzar wrote the President and Council that Souragud Dowlet flew into a great rage and instantly ordered his *jemmidars* to march with all expedition to invest Cossimbuzar Factory and that he would follow with his artillery.

Under date the 25th of May Mr. Watts and his Council advised that a party of three hundred horse under the command of Omerbeg were placed on the factory and all business stopped; That orders to the same purpose were likewise issued to the several *aurungs* and subordinate factories. We were now daily advised of additional forces surrounding Cossimbuzar Factory and threats from the Nabob that he would make an attack unless we strictly complied with his orders to erase our fortifications and fill up the ditch, on which we again addressed Souragud Dowlet setting forth we are quite ignorant of the cause of his so great displeasure and requested if our words were not by him credited that he would be pleased to send some persons in whom he could confide to survey what works we were carrying on, and that we should obey his orders after he had a fair representation made him. This letter was sent to Cossimbuzar in triplicates. We also forwarded Mr. Watts and Council two blanks to fill up with their complaints of the extortions of Hookembeg and other *Durbar* officers as he

[1] Or *Subahdars*, *i.e.*, Nawabs.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and they should think advisable, they having wrote us that Hookembeg fomented this trouble with the Nabob. We further gave them liberty to insert any other circumstances they should themselves approve of rather than reduce the Nabob to such extremities as to begin an attack, but cautioned them not to mention we would demolish our fortifications, nor were these blanks of any avail since they were not received into the factory until after the Moors had obtained the possession thereof.

To the several letters wrote the Nabob in the most mild and submissive terms we received no reply, which convinced us it was not any sum we could dare[1] to give would pacify his wrath nor did the gentlemen at Cossimbuzar ever intimate that money was required; contrary thereto, the President certifies that in one letter he received from Mr. Watts mention was made that it was not money the Nabob wanted, but an implicit obedience to all his orders and that whoever transgressed them suffered great indignity.

On the 3rd June a *cossid*[2] arrived in twenty seven hours with a general letter from Cossimbuzar under date the 2nd of said month importing that a large artillery and the Nabob himself with a numerous force were encamped on the other side of the river opposite the factory and that they were erecting a battery. This advice made us believe no solicitations by his ministers, letters from us, or any gift we could offer would pacify his extreme anger against us. Nevertheless as it was generally believed Coja Wazeed had an interest with the Nabob and had ever professed himself a friend to the English Company, we essayed by his means to have the several letters we had wrote the Nabob delivered him, as we had some doubt whether those letters had not been impeded. Accordingly copies thereof were prepared and sent by express *cossids* to Coja Wazeed but unfortunate for us as it then appeared Coja Wazeed had taken his leave of Souragud Dowlet and was set out from Muxadavad on his way to Houghley.

In the last mentioned letter from Cossimbuzar the gentlemen requested we would if possible supply them with a reinforcement of one hundred men. This was referred to our military officers,

[1] The Court of Directors had forbidden the Council to give presents to the Nawab.

[2] A courier or messenger.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

we having previously acquainted them that the number of forces then surrounding the factory was upwards of 3000 horse and foot, and that the Nabob with 8000 forces and a train of artillery were encamped opposite the factory. To this the several military officers gave in as their unanimous opinion it was impracticable throwing in any assistance in such circumstances, and at a time of year when the river from Nudea to Cossimbuzar was fordable in many places,[1] and that any forces we could send would undoubtedly be much annoyed by the several *chowkeys*[2] in the passage up, and to oppose a body of horse and force their way into the factory they esteemed quite impracticable and a great risque of having those recruits [? reinforcements] entirely cut off or made prisoners, and that such a detachment would also too much weaken our own garrison, as it was then rumoured the Nabob his design was to march to Calcutta could he obtain by conquest our factory at Cossimbuzar. These reasons swayed our opinions and we replyed by the quickest dispatch that it appeared to us an impossibility the sending with any safety the reinforcement they required, not doubting but with the men they had, joined with the *peons* and *buxerries* belonging to their factory, they would be able to make a vigorous resistance if the Nabob his rashness carried him so far as to make an attack upon the factory, and that as the rainy season was nigh advanced[3] we deemed they would be capable to maintain the factory and tire the Nabob and his forces out, especially as Omerbeg the first *jemidar* placed on the factory had behaved with civility and suffered them to lay in provision.

Here it will not be improper to observe that on or about the 20th of May Mr. Watts advised the President that our Settlement of Calcutta had been represented to Souragud Dowlet as a place of no defence, of immense wealth and could with great ease be conquered, Therefore advised that we should immediately raise as many forces as we could and strengthen ourselves with the utmost expedition. This intelligence prompted the Governour immediately

[1] This means that boats could not pass up, and that troops would have to go by land—an impossibility for a small European force in a hostile country and in the hottest season of the year.

[2] Posts or stations for the levy of tolls on merchandize.

[3] The Rains begin about the middle of June.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

to issue his order to Commandant Minchin to raise as many souldiers as possible and each man that enlisted was to have a gratuity of twenty rupees. We likewise ordered Mr. Holwell to entertain a number of *buxerries*, advanced the pay of our labourers and began to lay in a stock of provisions; all *cossids* were ordered to bring every letter received and dispatched to the President to be by him read in the presence of those persons to whom they were subscribed or who had wrote such letters, this precaution we found was attended with the intent we had to prevent our hidden enemies and crafty great men from advising the Nabob and his officers of every minute transaction which passed in Calcutta, as at this time every labourer was employed and the greatest efforts made to fortify ourselves in the best manner a small space of time would allow of.

From the receipt of the last general letter to the 7th June we had not any advice from our gentlemen at Cossimbuzar, owing to the Nabob his strict orders being complied with to stop all intelligence from that quarter, however on the 6th June on Sunday night a report was handed from Chandernagore that our factory was taken by the Moors and Mr. Watts conducted to the Nabob with his hands bound. This intelligence did not gain credit in Calcutta as our last advices expressed a resolution among the gentlemen there, who had in garrison about fifty Europeans under the command of a Lieutenant and sufficiently provided with cannon and stores. But as such a tiding was not altogether to be passed over in silence the Governour summoned a Council early the next morning and communicated the purport of what he had heard to the gentlemen thereof. The military Captains were ordered to attend when we termed this meeting a Council of war and ordered that Messrs. Symson and O'Hara engineers jointly with our Commandant and other officers to draw out a plan of defence for the place and inhabitants of Calcutta against the irruption of the Moors, who as they were numerous was at first imagined to require an extensive line.

The engineers and officers in pursuance of this order surveyed the place and delivered their opinion thereon, which was to contract the lines into a narrower compass than was at first intended that our posture of defence might be the sooner compleated.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Their proposition was that instant ordered to be set about and every white inhabitant furnished what materials they had to finish the work as soon as hands could perform it.

At 10 in the morning the 7th June we received a letter from Adrian Bisdom Esq., Director of Houghly accompanied with another from Mr. Collet, second of Cossimbuzar, certifying that the English factory there was in the Moors' possession. This news caused an inexpressible consternation amongst us as we had always been of opinion that the fort at Cossimbuzar was in no danger from a Moors army, and confirmed therein from the positiveness of Mr. Grant, who had been officer there and who certified at the Board that there was not any cause to apprehend the Nabob's forces could conquer and take possession thereof if our men behaved with resolution, and that it was a place he should have no doubt of maintaining with the same number of men then at the factory with the guns and stores.

The certain intelligence of the capture of our fort at Cossimbuzar and of Souragud Dowlet's intention to proceed directly to Calcutta made us seriously to consider what defence we could make for the reception of an enemy who were flushed with hopes that they might obtain by craftiness and deceit as easy a surrender of our capital settlement in Bengal, nothing near so defensible and labouring under a variety of disadvantages from its situation. Accordingly we again sent for the Commandant and officers to inquire into the state of our garrison, who reported that there were upwards of seventy men sick in the hospital and quarters and on parties up and down the river twenty-five. That the remainder were chiefly Portugueze consisting of about one hundred eighty, exclusive of the artillery company.

In pursuance to our last resolution of contracting our lines the engineers threw up three batteries in the principal avenues of the town, one to the eastward adjoining to the Mayor's Court House and running cross that road to the Park[1] on which were mounted two guns, one nine pounder and one six pounder with an embrasure pointing to the southward down the Rope Walk for another gun in case the enemy made an irruption there; another battery

[1] Also called the Lal Bagh. Later known as Tank Square, and now called Dalhousie Square.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

was erected to the southward of the town, close to the house of Mr. Burrow, running across that road with the same number and weight of guns; the third battery guarded the northward avenues and ran across the road from Mr. Griffith's house to the waterside on which were mounted two six pounders. These were the only guns ready on the occasion having none of heavier metal mounted on good carriages. The small avenues behind these three batteries were defended by breastworks and intervening spaces were left to be defended by the walls of the houses. A raveline was likewise thrown up before the front[1] gate of our factory. The several roads were likewise cut through and bridges broke down. This was thought to be the best defence that could be made at so short a warning.

To strengthen our garrison we immediately recalled the several subordinates of Dacca, Jugdea, and Ballasore, directing the gentlemen there to proceed to Calcutta with all expedition if they could get through the Nabob's forces with all their military stores, treasure, and books, leaving the charge of the several factories under care of their head *peons*.

The 7th June in the evening the militia were under arms and were ordered to attend early on the parade the next morning in order that the several commissions should be read and they properly formed into companies. The numbers which appeared amounted to upwards of two hundred and fifty, about one hundred of them were Europeans, part of whom were called off their duty in the shipping and could not well be reckoned as Militia. The remainder were country-born Portugueze and Armenians.

A commission of Colonel was granted Mr. Manningham, Lieutenant Colonel Mr. Frankland; Captains' commission Messrs. Holwell, Macket and Mapletoft;[2] Lieutenants' Messrs. Holme, Wedderburn, Court and Sumner; Ensigns' Messrs. Coales, Baldrick, Douglas and Dumbleton. The military promotions were as follows Lieutenant Smith made Captain-Lieutenant; Captain Grant made Adjutant General, Lieutenant Talbot Adjutant, Mr. O'Hara Lieutenant of the Train. The several commissions being delivered the militia were formed into three companies: But

[1] The eastern gate, facing inland.

[2] The Rev. Mr. Mapletoft was appointed Captain-Lieutenant.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

finding the Portugueze and Armenians extremely awkward at their arms it was judged proper that one company should consist entirely of Europeans and all the care possible was taken for disciplining those new troops that the time would allow of, they being constantly trained morning and evening in a body until it was found necessary to form the several dispositions at the three batteries. It is necessary to observe here that many Company's covenanted servants and young gentlemen in the Settlement entered as volunteers in the military, doing duty in every respect as common souldiers and always expressing a forwardness to be sent on command, a spirit shewn never sufficiently to be commended. This was no small weakening to the militia as these young gentlemen had for some time past been planning a scheme for forming themselves into a military body with officers of their own chusing.[1] But as that plan was not compleated the Governour and Council did not think proper to give their assents to it as they thought they might be more serviceable another way.

The posture of defence concluded on being thus set forth, it naturally occurs that particular mention should be made in what manner the Nabob obtained possession of Cossimbuzar Factory which was on the 4th of June,[2] and shall now be set down in Messrs. Watts and Collet their own words penned in a foul draft of a letter which came to hand the 15th of said month, advising that under several dates they had wrote that the factory was surrounded by the Nabob's forces; That on the 2nd of June the whole army except those which remained with the Nabob who was expected in the evening were encamped round them with a large train of artillery and that the Nabob had repeated his orders to attack them unless the chief would quit his fort and come to him, on which they wrote to Roydoolub who was to command the attack and who replied that he would conduct the chief to the Nabob and that he might rest secured no harm should happen to him and to confirm what he had wrote he sent him two *beetles* (which is a token of friendly acts); That as they could not expect

[1] This was done after the recapture of Calcutta. The first commander of this band of volunteers was Mr. Rider. He was killed in the short war with the Dutch in 1759.

[2] The actual delivery of the Fort appears to have been on this date, but Mr. Watts went to the Nabob's camp on the 2nd.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

to hold out long against an army reported then to consist of 20,000 horse and 30,000 foot the whole factory concluded and thought it adviseable for the Chief to go as the only means to prevent the factory being plundered and the Company's effects seized at the several subordinates and *aurungs*, also to retard if not prevent the Nabob's expedition to Calcutta; That on Mr. Watts being introduced to the Nabob he was called a *genim* (or robber) and was ordered into immediate confinement and obliged to sign an obligation that the President and Council of Calcutta should fill up the ditch and level their works in fifteen days, and that if it could be proved we had granted *dustucks* to particular merchants we should reimburse the loss the Government had sustained in their duties; That the next day the Nabob sent for Messrs. Collet and Batson to sign likewise the obligation, but on their arrival they were likewise confined and no further mention made thereof; That the day following the Nabob ordered them to give up their guns and ammunition which they consented to, hoping that would pacify him, and Mr. Collet was sent to the factory to deliver them and was delivering them when he was again demanded to the camp and Mr. Batson sent to the factory; That the above particulars they write by order of Roydoolub and that the Nabob was marching down with his whole force determined to attack Calcutta unless we complied with his demands which were then very exorbitant, not less than a *corore* of rupees, the demolishing our works and the delivering up his tenants with all their wealth; That they cannot be certain what Souragud Dowlets intentions are, whether to drive us out of the country or to have a sum of money; That Roydoolub told them the French and Dutch had given obligations to assist the Nabob. This is the purport of a letter brought us by a strange *peon;* other circumstances have been transmitted which we shall here enumerate and one in particular, to serve as a cover to the Nabob's treacherous behaviour and to amuse us, was the entire substance of a letter from Mr. Watts and his Council setting forth that Souragud Dowlet was particularly disgusted at the new redoubt and drawbridge erected at Baagbazar on the plan of Colonel Scot and at an Octagon built at Mr. Kelsall's garden which was represented to him as a strong fortification. On receipt of that letter the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

bridge was taken up and we replied that if the pulling down of the Octagon would be satisfactory it should be immediately set about, and we had some hopes that any small compliance on our side to the Nabob's commands was a pretence by him sought for to retire from our factory at Cossimbuzar with a good grace.

After Mr. Batson had delivered the guns and ammunition to the Moors the Treasury and warehouses were sealed up and the gentlemen and souldiers were made prisoners and a few days after were carried to Muxadavad; Mrs. Watts and her children were sent to the French factory and a receipt was exacted from the French Chief for the redelivering of them when demanded.

Our further resolutions and proceedings on the 7th June were as follows, and it was primarily thought adviseable to write to the French and Dutch Governours and Councils requiring their assistance against this rash Nabob whom we thought ought to be looked on as a common enemy to the several European nations. The reply we received from the Dutch was that they had positive orders from their superiors to be neuter in any quarrels or dispute with the Government and other nations, that they were only placed in Bengal as merchants and could not afford us any assistance. The French replied they were ready to enter into a defensive alliance but that their garrison was very weak and they should too much expose themselves by sending us assistance at a time they also expected the extravagant temper of the Nabob would determine him to make an attack on Chandernagore. A second letter was wrote the French acquiescing with their proposal of a defensive alliance, but affairs now coming to a crisis and the Nabob his near approach put it out of our power to conclude on articles and put that scheme in execution. In this second letter we required the French to assist us with two large ships but even that request was denied nor did they furnish us at our desire any kind of ammunition. In reply to the Dutch letter the President and Council formally protested against them but with no better success. We had already by five conveyances dispatched letters to Madrass and Vizagapatam informing the gentlemen there of our situation, peremptorily demanding a strong reinforcement of men with ammunition and other warlike stores which we now repeated in our advice to them of the loss of Cossimbuzar factory, and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

requested that the purport of our letter might be communicated to the Admiral, giving them a hint that upwards of 600 men had been detained on the Coast[1] since the year 1752, during their troubles, which were sent out by the Company to recruit our Settlement. This stoppage of our men as also firearms together with a large body of Europeans we had sent to their relief at the close of last war will account for our having been so barren of Europe military. Their numbers will be hereafter specified, and here it is to be remarked that our garrison at the Subordinates were most of them Europeans. The President forwarded to Mr. Pigot copies of such letters he had received from Mr. Watts which were most circumstantial to inform of our situation with the Nabob and we also wrote to the Presidency of Bombay.

The evening of the 7th June Soo Babboo, Coja Wazud's *duan*, came to Calcutta by order from his master and brought with him three original letters which Souragud Dowlet had wrote Wazud from Rajahmaul, Muxadavad and in his way to attack us, translate of which letters will be annexed to this narrative and they are now particularly referred to the perusal thereof, convinced us that the Nabob had thrown off all regard for the prosperity of his provinces, and that he listened to no advice offered him by any of his prime ministers or principal merchants and *shroffs*[2] as our destruction must inevitably bring on ruin to his country. It was also given out that he was determined to extirpate the French and Dutch after he had drove out the English. The purport of those letters referred to will bear this interpretation that no late act committed by the English has been the real cause of the troubles they are now involved in, but as expressed in the Nabob's first letter an obstinate resolution to expel them his dominions. However we had some idea that if a fair opportunity was given Souragud Dowlet he would retract his severe threats, and to afford him a favourable occasion imagining Coja Wazud's *duan* was sent partly to obtain a condescension on our parts and to make his master appear interested to our Employers,[3] we agreed to write him to the following effect 'That we always esteemed him as our friend

[1] Madras, or Fort Saint George, was ordinarily referred to as the 'Coast,' Bengal as the 'Bay.'

[2] Bankers.

[3] The Court of Directors.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and patron with the Government and gave to his decision the present difference actuated by our enemies even in our own Settlement, (Soo Babboo having privately acquainted the Governour that Omichund had been assisting to draw the Nabob's anger on us, and which information the President made known to Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, Holwell and others of his Council), with which letter Coja Wazud's *duan* was immediately returned to his master carrying with him another letter for the Nabob wrote in the most submissive terms and acquainting him we had referred an accommodation to Coja Wazud. This concluded the proceedings of this day.

The utmost diligence was now used to finish our batteries, ravelin, and outworks, providing quantities of provision, exercising our militia and preparing in every respect to stand a siege; in sending spies by different ways to learn the motions of the Nabob and how his army stood affected. The reports brought us were that he was marching hastily towards Calcutta with an army consisting of fifty thousand men horse and foot, 150 elephants, and a number of camels with the greatest part of the cannon he had taken at Cossimbuzar with 25 Europeans as gunners and upwards of 200 Portugueze. It cannot be said that this report depressed the brave resolution which was shewn to defend to the last our lives, liberty and fortunes, and in proof of our steadiness to oppose the enemy as much as possible three vessels and a detachment were ordered to attempt taking possession of Tannah's fort, at which place we heard a body of men were arrived with some artillery and that the Moors intended to raise a fortification in order to impede our ships, vessels, and boats passing and repassing, and to cut off all supplies of provision coming up the river. We so far succeeded in this first attempt as to drive away the small forces which were then arrived, spiked and threw into the river seven of their cannon, burnt what houses were prepared for the shelter of part of the Nabob his army, and broke down part of the embrasures, but it not being in our power to maintain that place on account of the small number of forces we had, the military were recalled and the ships *Dadley*, *Prince George* and *Lively* grabb[1] were ordered to remain there, which they did until

[1] Arab word for a galley.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the 15th June when a body of upwards of 2,000 men and 15 pieces of cannon arrived, on which those vessels being of no farther use in that station they were recalled and we found we had lost some men and others wounded. All Moors boats were ordered to be stopped and we brought up to town two ships that carried their colours.

The 10th of June Coja Wazud's *duan* made us another visit from Houghly and presented a letter from his master to the Governour to this purport that with our approval he would have a meeting with the Nabob, who then was advanced to Kisnagur, and use his interest to stop his progress; at the same time advised us not to be amused but to strengthen ourselves with as much expedition as possible. This second message led us to imagine affairs would be accommodated, however we did not slacken the preparations concluded on to receive the Nabob's attack, but approved by letter what Coja Wazud had proposed. A detachment of 10 military and five volunteers were at night ordered to go up the river as far as Sooksoor (half way to Houghly) by beat of drum and to return without any noise. This caused a great alarm, as was intended, to the people inhabiting the banks of the river, and the report flew that the English were on their way to attack Houghly, which threw them into the utmost confusion and, before the next night, 2,000 horse arrived to their assistance from the advanced party of the Nabob's army ready to drop down through the expedition they came with. Variety of intelligence now was brought us by the spies we had sent to different parts, some declaring the Nabob's forces seemed averse to advance any further, others quite contradictory that they were exulting in their camp and had this encouragement given them that the plunder of the town should be their own property; That a granary was preparing about seventeen miles from Calcutta and that orders were issued to make a passage over Golgaut *Nulla*, about five miles distance from us, in order to transport cannon to Bougbuggee, situated by the river side thirteen miles below Calcutta; That the Rajah of Budwan and every principal *jemidars* were ordered to join Souragud Dowlet's forces and strict orders were given that we should not by any ways or means be supplied with necessaries of life. Such intelligence made us conclude that no entreaty could stop the progress of the Nabob his march.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

On Friday the 11th June having received certain intelligence that the Nabob had crossed the river of Kisnagur with a great number of cannon it was resolved that a general review should be had of our whole force the next morning. In order to make the necessary disposition of them at the batteries and in the fort for this purpose it was judged necessary that the Militia Adjutant should receive orders from Captain Grant, Adjutant General, and the next morning there appeared under arms as follows:—

Military (of these not above 45 Europeans)	180
Volunteers (Europeans)	50
Militia (Europeans)	60
Militia (Armenians and Portugueze)	150
Artillery (Europeans)	35
Volunteers (consisting of sea officers and Portugueze helmsmen)	40
	515

These were the forces to be disposed to receive the attack of the Nabob his army and were marched off the parade in the following manner. To the Court House Battery

Military	50
Volunteers	20
European Militia	20
Artillery	8
	98

under the command of Captains Clayton and Holwell with three subaltern officers. To the Southern Battery

Military	50
Volunteers	20
European Militia	20
Artillery	8
	98

under the Command of Captains Buchanan and Mackett with three subalterns. To the Northern Battery

Military	30
Volunteers	10
European Militia	20
Artillery	8
	68

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

under the command of Captain-Lieutenants Smith and Mapletoft with three subalterns.

For Garrison duty in the fort were allotted the Armenian and Portugueze Militia consisting of about one hundred and fifty with 25 Military commanded by the remaining subaltern officers.

The remaining 25 Military were posted at the Redoubt of Baag Bazar under the command of Ensign Paccard. As it was expected the enemies forces would attempt their first passage there the remaining part of the Artillery Company were destined for the service of the Fort and Laboratory and 20 of them and their Volunteers were ordered to be ready to march with the seven field pieces at a moment's warning.

As related in the foregoing paragraph was the disposition of our small forces, and during the time of their remaining at the batterys the Military and Militia were disciplined together in the most useful part of the exercise. Additional pay was offered to *lascars*[1] who could have been of great service in working the large guns. The *cooleys*'[2] pay was increased as an encouragement to keep them from flight and that our works should be compleated. The Military and Militia were allowed diet money and promises of future reward (in case we overcame our enemies of which we believe no man doubted at least until we could be supplied with a reinforcement from the Coast of Coromandel). Having thus mentioned the disposition of our troops, it is time now to give some account of our military stores and fortifications that it may be judged what situation we were in those respects to endure a siege.

First then our guns on the bastions when we first heard of the Nabob his approach were in general in such bad order that scarce a carriage was to be depended upon, nor had we a carriage small or great fit to be drawn out to any of our batteries except two field pieces six pounders, expecting Colonel Scott his indent to Europe for trucks &c. materials would be complied with. To remedy this defect all possible diligence was used and both English and country carpenters were employed night and day in that service and besides the guns mounted at the batteries we had several others in a short time on our bastions in a good condition.

[1] Indian sailors. [2] Porters or labourers.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

With regard to warlike stores we were in a very bad plight, few cannon cartridges or shells being filled or fitted with fuze that could be depended upon, neither had we any quantity of grape shot fit for service, what stores had been formerly prepared being rendered in a great degree useless from the damps of the climate and vermin,[1] but these defects were remedied by the constant labour of those employed in the Laboratory, and our women diligently employed themselves in making cannon cartridges. The most mortifying circumstance we laboured under was the small quantity of gunpowder we had in garrison, not exceeding seven hundred *maunds*, great part of that damp, but this was a larger ballance than we have had remaining for some years past, and it is an impossibility in the Rains to preserve it good. Our fortifications were very disadvantageous to endure a long siege, our parapet being greatly too low to cover our men, neither could we get labourers to bring sand bags or cotton bales to raise them (those kind of people hourly deserting and carrying their families inland). The wall of our parapet not above three feet thick and the embrasures so large as to expose our men greatly on the bastions to small arms. Besides which we were so closely surrounded on all sides by the Church and upper room houses which commanded our whole parapet and bastions that our men could not stand [on] them with any security but were liable to be picked off one by one by the enemy who compleatly overlooked us on all sides as we found afterwards to be the case.

The black merchants and inhabitants[2] were greatly terrified at the near approach of Souragud Dowlet's army sending their women and effects to different parts of the country. They had before been sent for and ordered to erect *futtocks* in different streets of the Black Town,[3] but they are such a niggardly race of people that we gained no assistance or strength to the place from any of those whose great-great-grandfathers had enjoyed the protection of our flag under which they accumulated what they were now possessed of. We should do injustice not to distinguish

[1] Probably refers to white ants.

[2] I am told the term *habitans* is still used by the French Canadians to describe the country settlers.

[3] This term was commonly used in India for the native quarter. There is now no such absolute distinction between the portions occupied by Europeans and natives.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the spirit shewn by Govindram Metre who employed several hands at his part of the town by Baag Bazar in felling down trees and cutting through the roads to break the enemy's passage, stopped up the small avenues leading into our town, and destroyed many houses where the enemy might have obtained shelter.

On the 12th June a letter was brought us from Messrs. Watts and Collet from the opposite side of Houghly informing they were then with the van of the Nabob his army, who then talked very high, and hoped we would consider them as they had been betrayed into that confinement by going to see the Nabob, induced thereto by fair promises, imagining by that step to have prevented the Company's effects being plundered; That they did not think proper to write more as they were in doubt whether any letters could arrive safe. This certain news of the enemy being so nigh at hand made us conclude the several pretexts of Coja Wazud's *duan's* errands were fallacious and that he was a secret enemy under pretence of using his endeavours to accommodate matters and stop the progress of the Nabob his army. Mr. Watts when at Cossimbuzar made mention that he Coja Wazud was not unsuspected being an instigator to the troubles which were then in agitation. Hereupon our forces were told to repair to their quarters, expecting small parties would endeavour to annoy us, and from the foregoing circumstances we could not expect by any means to appease the wrath of the Nabob or to retard his motions, therefore we had nothing left but to appear undaunted at the approach of an army consisting of 65,000 effective men, horse and foot besides a train of artillery and elephants and camels, hoping we should be able to repulse them on the first attack and throw such a fear into the Moors as to make them cautious how they again attempted our lines. It was essayed to draw from the Nabob's army the several Europeans and Portugueze by application in writing from the priests who by three letters represented to them how contrary it was to Christianity their taking arms in the service of the Moors against Christians, with threats from those priests unless they quitted the evil way they were in and came to our assistance where they would be received into pay. These letters were sent to the Nabob's camp to be delivered the first Christian could be met with. On receipt thereof they declared

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

there was no means left for them to escape, that had they been before advised of the offence they were committing they could possibly have found an opportunity of coming over to us.

The utmost care was taken that no spies should be harboured within our town and several were taken up on suspicion of coming from the Nabob's camp. Omichund having been suspected that he had engaged with the Government against our interest, a strict eye was kept to seize on any letters that came to him and it having been observed that a small boat had for two days past been seen passing to and fro, a reward was offered to any person that secured her, which was accordingly done the 13th of June and the people were brought up, who denied they had any letters for any person, but after having received punishment they confessed there were two letters hid in the boat directed to Omichund from Rogeram the *Phousdar* of Midnapoor and principal spy to the Nabob, which were perused and contained the following circumstances, 'That it would be prudent for him Omichund to secure his effects in the best manner he could, at the same time he demanded a sum of money due to him and particularly desired that all effects he had in Calcutta might be sent out of the Settlement and assured him of his friendship.' These letters were wrote in a language scarce anyone in the place could read but Omichund's dependants, one of whom had the explanation of them.[1] The caution used to prevent these letters being seized gave strong suspicion that Omichund held further secret correspondence and was engaged in the interest of Souragud Dowlet and that not without good and sufficient grounds founded on the favour which had been for these four years past shewn him by the late and present Nabob, it being a known truth, that two years ago he was offered the Nabobship of Poorenia, and a few days past obtained a *perwannah* giving him the same grants and privileges as enjoyed by Juggetseat, which grant he endeavoured to conceal. This together with the chief provision of the Company's investment being taken out of his hands and his treacherous dealing with Rajabullub's family will we think convince any man that he was deeply engaged to bring about our ruin and to enrich the Nabob in order to save his own wealth and interest with him, a base ingratitude not with any

[1] Omichund was not a Bengali, but an up-country man.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

degree of patience to be thought of and which were the motives that determined the President to order him into immediate confinement in the fort and a guard of twenty military to his house that his effects might not be carried away. His brother-in-law Huzzeroomull hearing of the confinement of Omichund concealed himself among the women for that night but was apprehended the next morning by our souldiers on his Huzzeroomull's servants firing on them from the windows, on which he [? they] cut off his left hand and, though it is not materially to the purpose yet it ought not to be passed over in silence, the amazing resolution shown by Jaggernaut the commander of Omichund's *peons* on this occasion, who seeing his master imprisoned killed thirteen women and three children with his *catary*[1] and afterwards set his own house on fire, where was believed were deposited several letters. On our souldiers being attacked by the servants in Omichund's house they entered therein and found several firearms and cutlasses laying about and two small rooms were filled therewith which the military had broke open as Captain-Lieutenant Smith informed the Governour. This may serve as a glaring proof that we had a enemy situated close by our outlines furnished with warlike stores to supply the Moors. At night Mr. Holwell sent word to the factory that Kissendass, son to Rajabullub, had prepared to make his escape and had twice attempted to force his passage through the guard that was placed on his habitation, on which military was sent to secure him. He and his attendants were brought to the factory the 14th June in the morning. This step was pursued to secure his and family's presence before the Nabob if that would have been assisting to moderate his passion.

At noon the 14th June our spies brought us word that a division of the Nabob's army were encamped nigh Barrasut, fifteen miles distance, and that a small party had been seen at Dumduma about seven miles distance. A letter was also received from a renegado Frenchman addressed to the President and Council who informed them that through various misfortunes he had been obliged to take service with the Moors where he had obtained an honourable title, signing himself Le Marquis de Saint Jacques, and, as he flattered himself by having the command of the Nabob

[1] Dagger.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

his artillery that he was in no small favour, he doubted not but by his interest he should be able to make an advantageous peace if he had our authority for so doing and that he was extremely pleased to hear from Mr. Renault, the French Director at Chandernagore, that we were in amity. Copy of this letter the President transmitted to Mr. Renault, who replied thereto that this Monsieur Saint Jacques had been an officer and was turned out of Pondicherry with disgrace, that he had likewise committed great enormities at Chandernagore and was a flighty hair brained man not in the least to be depended on or regarded. When this answer came to hand it was imagined sending a reply to his offer of service could no ways prejudice our cause but might be a means of drawing him, the Europeans and Portugueze under his command, over to our side, wherefore he was wrote to the following purport that we were highly sensible of his offer of service but it was not in our power to stipulate any terms to be made the Nabob as we were quite ignorant of the cause which brought his army against us or of his expectations; that in recompense for his, Monsieur Saint Jacques', good will towards us we assured him a kind reception with the Europeans and Portugueze under his command, and that if he thought proper to bring them off with him he should have no occasion to complain of our ingratitude. No reply to this letter coming to hand made us doubtful whether or not it reached Monsieur Saint Jacques. A further information we received that this said renegado had been dispatched at the head of 200 horse to the Dutch and French factories demanding from them in the Nabob's name assistance of sloops, ships, cannon and ammunition, with threats, if they refused, to invest their factories on his return from Calcutta, and we were told by a spy that a quantity of gunpowder was landed by the French at Banquebazar.

A report prevailing at Houghly that we had confined Coja Wazud's *duan* occasioned his sending the Governour a letter by *cossid* desiring in short terms we would send Omichund (whom he heard was at our call) or some other person to the Nabob in our behalf. This was looked on as chiefly intending to obtain Omichund his releasement, therefore it was concluded to make this reply that we had before at Coja Wazud's request submitted the Company's affairs with the Government to his management,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

that sending Omichund or anyone else to the Nabob after his having offered to espouse our cause we did not see could avail anything in our behalf, therefore as we had before entrusted him to accommodate all differences between the Nabob and us we still relied on his influence to extricate us from Souragud Dowlet's heavy displeasure. Having brought down our situation to this time we shall now resume the account of our military transactions.

The 14th June we appointed three field officers, *viz.*, Colonel Manningham, Lieutenant-Colonel Frankland, and Commandant Minchin each to take his day in four and to visit the out batteries now compleated, to receive all reports and issue orders from the President and Adjutant General. Mr. Manningham at this time seeing the Governour was fully employed and attentively engaged for the prosperity of the Settlement, voluntary offered to undertake the charge of the Marine, which was consented to by minute in Council and application on that branch was hereafter to him applied and his orders followed.

Frequent alarms of the near approach of the enemy made us resolve to make as clear a passage as we could to oppose the attack, for which purpose we set fire to all the straw houses within our Lines, which fire spread itself to a much greater distance. Our *cooleys*, *lascars* and servants now deserted us. The Portugueze and Armenian women with their slaves now filled all the houses adjacent to the factory, and the 16th June in the evening our own women were called into the fort, the alarm signal being made which was three guns fired at a minute's distance from the north-east bastion. Great resolution was still shewn by every individual and we were as we thought sufficiently prepared to hold out against the Moors until we could have further supplies of men and ammunition from the Coast, which we expected to arrive about the 10th August, though we should be obliged to keep the fort, having lain in a quantity of rice, wheat and biscuit with other provisions under our commands within the Lines.

To the period of time the 16th of June at half past one in the afternoon we were not disturbed with the noise of our enemies' cannon, when we received an alarm that an advanced party of the enemy, consisting of 4,000 men and some artillery, were attempting a passage at Baagbazar and that they had raised a battery of

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

eight pieces of cannon to play on the redoubt. On this advice it was thought proper to reinforce Ensign Paccard's party and accordingly a detachment under the command of Lieutenant Blagg with two field pieces were ordered to march to his relief with the utmost expedition. The cannon of the enemy played chiefly on one of the two sloops which lay before the redoubt and killed five men. On the approach of our field pieces the enemy soon ceased their firing, attempting only to gaul us with their musquetry by keeping themselves concealed behind bushes and as little exposed as possible. Here we lost Mr. Thoresby[1] one of the Volunteers and three European souldiers who had advanced beyond the redoubt. Before dark the enemy was entirely drove off and retreated to the eastward on which Captain Clayton was detached with a small party to cover the retreat of Lieutenant Blagg. This step was thought necessary as they were to pass a number of small avenues least they should have been interrupted and cut off. In the evening we endeavoured to be at a certainty where the main body of the Moors had encamped, which we learnt was in Simily[2] and in and about Omichund's garden, when it was determined to set fire to the straw houses round about where the Nabob's forces lay in order to throw them into confusion and to retard their attack, which was accomplished but it being a dead calm the fire made little or no progress. Our *buxerries* had this day secured some plunderers who were got into some houses, among whom was a *jemidar* who reported to us that the army consisted of such numbers as has before been specified, *viz.*, 65,000 men, horse and foot, that the Nabob was himself about two miles distance and intended to make his general attack on Friday the 18th of June it being esteemed by the Moors a lucky day in the Ramazan which was at this season, to which superstitious notions those people pay the utmost regard. Let it be permitted to make mention that the President was informed that some time since Omichund had wrote the Nabob to hasten his march for that the English were not prepared for any defence, and if he now delayed proceeding with the utmost expedition they would be reinforced with Europe ships and men from the Coast, desiring that his letter

[1] A Company's Servant.

[2] A village or district within the British boundaries.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

might not be shewn Coja Wazud who was our firm friend, however Wazud's intimacy with Souragud Dowlet obtained him a sight of that letter by whose means it became published. It is likewise well known that on the Nabob's forces being repulsed at Baagbazar he Souragud Dowlet flew into a great rage and consulted with Monnickchund and others how to make a second attack there when it was agreed to place the elephants and camels in front to receive our cannon shot, by which means their men would be covered and force their entrance, but a message from Omichund altered that resolution and made the forces strike off to the eastward, he advising that an easy entrance into our town would be obtained there, and sent his own *jemidar* to conduct and shew them the passages. This has been declared by some of the *sepoys* and a servant who attended Omichund when in the factory and which servant was deputed to go to Jaggernaut the *jemidar* with those commands.[1]

In the morning of the 17th June large parties began to advance towards our northern and eastern batteries and indeed surrounded about two thirds of our Lines, advancing their cannon in the different avenues as they approached. From the northern battery Lieutenant Sumner and Ensign Walcott were detached with a small party of military and militia with a field piece to secure the principal avenues leading to that battery against which a party with an European at their head seemed to be forming a design of erecting one, but our cannon soon dispersed them and we had no further molestation that day at that quarter except that the plunderers who came close up to some breastworks within that command kept our musquetry in full employ. Their whole force now seemed to be bent against our battery which was commanded by Captains Clayton and Holwell, but soon perceived their intention was not to expose themselves to our batteries but that their dependance was on their great numbers to force themselves into the unguarded parts of our Lines and to take possession of our houses to annoy us with their small arms ; for this reason we detached several small parties to guard such dwellings that we were most exposed to, but with so small a force it was impossible to detach the least force to them all, at most being able only to spare a serjeant and

[1] It must be remembered that Omichand was at this time imprisoned in the fort.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

ten men to any of the houses we did take possession of. Before noon 4 or 500 of the enemy entered into that part of the town inhabited by our black merchants setting fire all about and plundering what they could find, committing most horrid cruelties. *Buxerries* were sent to disperse them but with very little effect having only brought in a few prisoners, from whom we learnt that the Nabob's artillery consisted of about sixty-five pieces [of] cannon, most of them large, which were directed by Europeans and Portugueze. The general attack being now soon to be expected a confused noise of the shrieks, cries, and entrance into our factory of the several women and children and their attendants was heard who had before situated themselves in the houses within our Lines. If we mention that the whole number of these incumbrances was 2,500 we shall not exceed; about 500 of which took immediately with our shipping. In the evening two field pieces were ordered to be advanced to each battery to be sent out as occasion required, but this did not answer the ends expected for besides the unskilfulness of most of the Train and the small number we had of them together with the desertion of the *lascars* who were to be employed in serving them they did not do that execution which might reasonably have been expected. Another step pursued this day was to take possession of the Goal[1] which commanded the grand avenues leading to the eastern battery. There we posted two small guns mounted on ship carriages and made loop holes fronting that battery. That command was given to Monsieur Le Beaume, a French officer who had left that flag thinking himself ill used and who on this occasion manifested great courage and conduct. With him were posted 6 military, 6 militia and 40 *buxerries*. This evening every person repaired to the stations allotted them and advanced centinels were placed to prevent a surprize from the Moors. Crow feet were ordered to the three batteries to be thrown on the road where we expected an advance of horse and things remained quiet after eight this night until the morning following, the 18th of June, when about sunrise we had notice that the enemy's army had divided themselves into three bodies in order to make three attacks, the first was on our northern battery and which was

[1] Jail

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

repulsed after a quick fire from our cannon and musquetry during the space of two hours, when the enemy had lost a number of their men. The second was made on the Goal where they advanced with two pieces of cannon, eighteen pounders, on which Monsieur Le Beaume was reinforced with an Ensign and ten volunteers, when he drew out his two small guns to oppose their coming on, but was obliged to retire to his post forthwith, that party being joined by those who had been repulsed at the northern battery and by those who intended an attack on the southern battery. It was now perceived their intent was to possess themselves of the Goal, to which place they advanced and kept a continual fire thereon but were at that time repulsed by our cannon and partridge. Hereon Captain Clayton (under whose orders Monsieur Le Beaume acted) being apprehensive of being attacked in flank and imagining the Goal could not long be supported sent and demanded the detachment there, and ordered Monsieur Le Beaume to retreat, on which he, considering the great utility of keeping possession thereof and that the enemy would meet with great obstacles without being able to advance through his fire, acquainted Captain Clayton therewith, demanding a further supply of ammunition to be enabled to keep his ground, which he maintained until about three in the afternoon, having lost three fourths of his people and himself and Ensign Carstairs wounded, when the retreat therefrom was made in obedience to repeated orders from Captain Clayton, the communication to supply him with ammunition being then cut off, bringing away the two field pieces which were sent there from the eastern battery, the ammunition which remained, and spiking up the two cannons.

The Goal being evacuated by our people the Moors immediately took possession thereof, the Playhouse and other adjacent houses, having cannon planted under cover of a wall close to the Playhouse. From these their possessions they kept so hot and continual a fire on our eastern battery and on the houses we had pretended to guard as to force those small parties to quit their station and retire to Captains Clayton and Holwell their command. The enemy lost no advantage having thrown in great numbers between the houses of Messrs. Margas and Minchin, occupying every place which could command the eastern battery, and they

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

were so well covered from every quarter that the cannon there could not annoy them and they stood the fire of our field pieces and small arms with great resolution. In order to batter the houses where the Moors were lodged an eighteen pounder was brought up from the fort and we were put to the shift of drawing up this large cannon by the aid of the militia, the *cooleys* having deserted. With the fire of this cannon the Moors were drove out of some of the houses and numbers of them were killed, but the houses being so numerous and each of them possessed by the enemy there was no possibility of silencing the continual fire they kept on the eastern battery which on the contrary hourly increased. The factory was annoyed from nine in the morning until the close of the evening with cannon shot, partridge, and fire arrows from the enemy, during which time the fort fired their cannon and threw cohorn and mortar shells from the bastions and rampart commanding the eastward part of the town, which was found to do execution at the Goal and several of the houses, and once a shout was heard that the Nabob's forces had retired from that quarter being drove in great numbers out of the Playhouse, which was again soon filled with people.

Captain Clayton judging that his post could not be held until next morning desired Mr. Holwell to bring us that report to the factory, which he did in the evening after having held argument thereon with Captain Clayton. The report was that the enemy pressed hard on them, that they were surrounded on all sides except in the avenues leading to the factory, and that they thought the post no longer defensible and requested leave to retreat. On which as we were highly sensible how material it was to keep possession of that battery a reinforcement was ordered thereto with positive orders not to quit, if possible to be defended until next day, when we imagined from the number of men slain of the enemies by the fire from the fort and other places a terror might seize them in the night and that they would decamp if we continued to appear resolute, fearful that we should fall on them, but before Mr. Holwell returned to Captain Clayton, or the succours arrived, he had beat the retreat which greatly astonished the several military and militia in that command, coming only away with their field pieces, on which an exulting noise was heard from

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the enemy who immediately entered our lines between Mr. Nixon's and Captain Minchin's houses to the south-east.

Captain Buchanan's battery being at some distance advanced to the southward was now left liable to be cut off from any communication to the fort, for which reason he had before been ordered to retire with his guns to another inner battery erected for that purpose, commanding the same avenue as the further advanced battery did, and which was now thought too risquous to endeavour maintaining as also the northern battery, both which were recalled, the enemy having possession of the Court House and eastern battery.

This retreat gave everybody no small shock, being sensible how little able we were to defend ourselves in a fort which was from every quarter overlooked by houses, joined with the appearance of our field pieces and ammunition being brought in by our own small forces, almost every *cooley* and *lascar* having took to flight, so that the great guns on the outward batteries could not be brought in, they were therefore spiked up and dismounted. Our safety now seemed to depend on taking possession of the Church and houses which commanded the bastions and curtains, and those too in reverse, and which in the hands of the enemy were so many forts against us even with small arms. The next step was to dispose our troops in them to the best advantage, whereupon a Council of War was called to deliberate on the measures and ways still to repulse the enemy. This was about seven in the evening of the 18th June when it was agreed that the Church, situated about thirty yards distance from our front gate, should be possessed by Captain Clayton with a party of 25 militia and military, that Lieutenant Bishop should with the same number post himself in Mr. Eyre his house close to the Church on the northward and which entirely commanded the north-east bastion of the fort. Captain-Lieutenant Smith and a party of 30 military and militia was ordered to Mr. Cruttenden's house, directly opposite Mr. Eyre's and situated within twenty yards to the northward of the fort and which commanded the whole north-east curtains with the north-east and north-west bastions. Lieutenant Blagg was posted in the Company's House situated to the southward of the fort with 25 military and militia and which com-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

manded the south curtain, south-east and south-west bastions. The rest of the troops were divided on the several bastions and curtains and the command of each bastion was given to the two most experienced sea captains that offered themselves out of the whole number, and Captain Weddrington of the Artillery Company was appointed to see that the ammunition was properly supplied. These necessary dispositions brought on night when we were left by every individual *lascar* and *cooley* kept in pay for the service of the great guns, the enemy keeping a constant fire on our fort until almost midnight. Our factory was crowded with women and children of the black inhabitants who, to avoid the cruelty and sword of the enemy, had as before mentioned pressed into the factory with families of our souldiers and militia who were fighting on our side.

We had almost forgot the arrival into the factory of Ensign Paccard and his party who had orders to retreat from Baag-Bazar and who brought with him his cannon and ammunition by water and whose whole behaviour merits the utmost commendation.

Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel, had in the daytime pressed the sending on board of ship our own women and children which was at the Council of War concluded on and those gentlemen voluntary offered to see them on board, the ships *Dadley* and *Diligence* being designed to receive them and a detachment of thirty men was ordered for the safeguard of such women and children, but so great was the confusion and disorder which prevailed that no regularity in the execution of orders were at this time put in practice, the men being so fatigued there was no rouzing those who were not on immediate duty on the bastions and curtains to stand to their arms, and with difficulty Monsieur Le Beaume, though wounded, obtained four souldiers as an escort to them. The Company's treasure was ordered to be shipped off which could not exceed 80,000 rupees, however that order was neglected, the Treasury being locked and the key (in the possession of the Sub-Treasurer and *Banyan*) not to be found that night. These foregoing dispositions being formed the Council of War broke up at half an hour past eight in the evening. Soon after Lieutenant Blagg requested that he and his party might have orders to retreat into the fort as they found the Company's house

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

so annoyed from Captain Rannie's which was situated close to the southward, from whence the enemy kept a very hot fire that it was not possible to maintain it any longer. His representation appeared fact and leave was given for their retreat. The President expressed himself astonished that Messrs. Manningham and Frankland did not return ashore. Their absence with Lieutenants Holme, Wedderburn and Sumner caused no small uneasiness to several. About ten Captain Holwell was by the President acquainted there seemed to be a sloth in the garrison and as he imagined occasioned by those gentlemen not returning from the *Dadley* at which he also expressed a surprize, when Colonel Manningham's note was received sent by Lieutenant Wedderburn importing that the thirty military were not come on board, this seeming intention of his and the other militia officers remaining out of the fort drew from the Governour a note signifying that the military could not then be spared and requiring his, Colonel Manningham's, presence ashore as quite necessary, to which no reply came to hand.

At eleven at night we were alarmed with the enemy's being under our walls and so adjacent were they as to distinctly hear they were preparing as was thought bamboo ladders to scale our walls, when our cannon to that quarter interrupted their design. The President who was then on the curtain to the southward ordered the commanding officer at the guard gate to beat to arms but without having the success of any man then off duty appearing and but one bastion answered the challenge which was given from the veranda of the new Consultation Room, neither had those on the curtains and bastions been regularly relieved, which prompted a second order for to beat to arms, but such was the fatigue our men had underwent in the day time that there was no rouzing them. At about half past one of the 19th June in the morning at a third beat of arms, the Armenians and Portugueze militia were quite dispirited and there was a constant call from our out posts for water and provision, none of them having had any refreshment the whole preceding day and the same complaint had been loud within our walls, for though care had been taken to lay in a quantity of provisions and some heads of the Armenians and Portugueze provided cooks to dress for their own people and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

several of our own lodged in the factory, yet we found ourselves quite destitute of all those helps, even the Governour had no servant but one slave boy. At two this morning, when were with him assembled Captain Minchin, Buchanan, Withrington, Grant, Holwell, Mackett, Lieutenant Court, O'Hara, Ensigns Coales, Baldrick, Messrs. Symson engineer, Baillie, Eyre, Fullerton, Beaumont, Nixon, Valicourt and Lindsay who, having a due sense of our present distressed condition by the fatigue our men on duty had underwent, the disorder of many of the militia and military who had got in liquor, a general complaint for want of provisions, encumbered with at least fifteen hundred women and children and their attendants, together with the enemy being close under our walls and in possession of many of our adjacent houses, in the midst of all this general confusion the before mentioned gentlemen met together and everyone was at liberty to give their opinion, when the Captain of the Artillery was first called on to know the state of our ammunition, who reported that in proportion of our expence there was no more left than sufficient for two days firing, and that the greatest part thereof was damp and not fit for use until dried, and that neither the weather or our present situation would afford an opportunity to dry it. This single circumstance put it out of all doubt but we should be obliged to retreat in that time having no prospect to effect a capitulation. The next consideration was what we might expect to be our situation at break of day, many of our men being drunk and in such state subject to no command, bayonets having been drawn on Messrs. O'Hara and Coales who were ordering some to their duty, no prospect of provision being to be got dressed for them, the Company's House expected to be in possession of the enemy on its being abandoned by us, by which means our people would not be able to stand [on] the south curtain or bastion whereby the barrier leading from the Company's House to the fort would in a manner be left defenceless; these and many other considerations intervening being canvassed, everyone present at that meeting except Mr. Baillie were of opinion there was no security for any of our lives but a retreat on board our ships. The next consideration was when and in what manner it ought to be done, it then being past two in the morning and too late then thought by the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

majority to be executed, being flood tide and not a sufficient number of boats remaining to carry off our men, those people having likewise left their employ and fled with their families into the country, besides the numbers which were carried away by the Portugueze women and others and which did not return to our wharf. It was therefore agreed if possible to stand the day's attack though much against the inclination of some present, particularly Mr. Holwell, who strenuously asserted the necessity of an immediate retreat if possible for all, and who evidently foresaw the confusion break of day would produce, for should the enemy get possession of the Company's and Mr. Cruttenden's house, it was an impossibility for any boats to lay at our wharf and we must inevitably have fallen a sacrifice to the Moors, from whom we expected no quarter, and any terms we could propose to the Nabob would not be listened to except that we had consented to deliver up our cannon, pull down our bastions and all fortifications, and submit to inhabit in these dominions as Armenians, which articles had we dared to comply with, would, with this rash Nabob, have submitted us to an easy prey at the expence of being plundered and no security left for future times. Omichund was sollicited by Mr. Holwell to go to the Nabob in our behalf though imagined by many to have been deeply engaged in this catastrophe. His refusal was sufficient to confirm he well knew the Nabob's determination to drive us out of the country and had been instrumental in bringing on these troubles.

A circumstance though not very material is thought proper to be inserted to shew how watchful the black women &c. were to make their escape. It was with the most profound silence Mr. Lindsay, a lame gentleman (having had the misfortune to lose his leg), was permitted on request to quit the factory, yet he was followed by numbers who took to boat and were carried off. On his arrival on board the *Dadley* when he found Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, Holme, Sumner and Monsieur Le Beaume, he acquainted them with the sentiments of all the gentlemen he had then parted from; which information made those gentlemen as they aver alter the resolution they had taken to come ashore at the setting in of the flood tide and to give what assistance lay in their power to favour the general retreat. They determined to

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

remain on board and endeavoured to send up small vessels and boats for that purpose to lay before the factory.

At break of day, the 19th June, things were found in as dreadful a situation as was expected. Many of the souldiers and Portugueze and Armenian militia unfit for duty, no preparations for getting any provisions dressed which caused great murmurings and complaint. However in this situation we did not doubt but those men who could not be rouzed at night would on the appearance of day gladly take to their arms and assist their utmost to repulse an enemy, from whom no quarter was expected if taken prisoners, but vain were our expectations for though we beat incessantly to arms scarce a man appeared of the Portugueze and Armenian militia or our souldiery, until the Governour, Messrs. Holwell and Baillie went through every part of the factory where many had hid themselves to encourage and bring them to their duty, to which they came but very faintly.

The southerly new *godowns*, on which were mounted cannon, being quite exposed to the enemy's fire from the Company's House, we endeavoured to carry up bales of cotton which were landed from the *Dadley* but for want of hands we were obliged to empty rice bags and fill them, some few of which we were able to get up before the Moors began to fire on us very warmly from the eastward and southward and attack our detachments which were guarding the Church, Messrs. Cruttenden's and Eyre's houses. It became now our duty to fire briskly on them from our two bastions on the land side and from the curtains to cover our people in the Church and those houses; but to very little purpose the forces against us being concealed under adjacent walls behind and in possession of houses close thereby. It may not be improper to mention here that the Moors had not possessed themselves of the Company's House as was expected, and looking on that place as of the utmost consequence (being not only necessary to defend our men on the southerly curtain but useful in protecting the boats, few of which remained, from deserting or being carried away though the utmost care had been taken to keep them together by placing *peons* as a guard over them) Ensign Paccard with twenty five military were there placed.

At sunrise we perceived that a numerous body of the enemy

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

were advancing on us from the eastward, they had in the night taken shelter of the battery quitted by Captain Clayton and had mounted cannon thereby. They also threw up a battery by Mr. Bellamy's habitation and had brought cannon to several other places where they could annoy us keeping a constant fire on our out posts and bastions therewith and with their small arms. Those in the factory returned their fire so fast that it was several times forbid the extravagant expence of powder which there would be soon occasion of want thereof to use. Numbers of the enemy were perceived to fall but their numbers increasing from every [side] we found it impossible to repulse them. At eight this morning Lieutenant Bishop, who was posted with a party of men in Mr. Eyre his house, desired leave to retire into the fort, the enemy gauling them so much from the contiguous houses that it was impossible to maintain it any longer. As the suffering this party to retreat into the fort would necessarily occasion the same orders to be given to all the out posts (for on the enemy's placing themselves there it would be an impossibility to maintain the Church or Mr. Cruttenden's house), Mr. Bishop was ordered to remain if possible until the evening, it being of the utmost consequence that he should do so that the general retreat might be made pursuant to our resolutions the night preceeding, but on his further pressing the necessity thereof, many of his men being killed, it was thought requisite to comply therewith and he and his party were then ordered to reinforce Captain Clayton in the Church, who about this time came to the factory and declared he was so beset by the enemy that he could no longer dwell there with his party and that some of them were killed. Soon after Ensign Paccard was brought from the Company's House wounded and his party came in, the enemy some of them having entered the yard of the said house. The Moors having now obtained lodgment in Mr. Eyre's and Company's houses the other outposts were permitted to quit their stations and our bastions and curtains were supplied with an additional number of men who kept up a vigorous fire on the Nabob's forces, which pressed on with great resolution. Now appeared the utmost horror amongst the women in the factory, running to and fro with their children, many sucking at the breast, to escape from the shot flying about

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

us and to retire from hunger they had endured. The effect of these incumbrances was now felt, they having carried away all our boats except five at half past nine in the morning and so crowded into them that many were overset and the passengers who fled from the cruelty of the Moors many of them were drowned. Our common souldiers and black militia [were] mutinous and under no command. The most dreadful circumstance was that our ammunition had been delivered to the several bastions and curtains by ten this morning except that which was damp and reported unfit for service by Captain Withrington the night before, the person who was employed in that service of delivering the powder making the Governour sensible thereof by a whisper and which was well known to several who were not on immediate duty and was the imagined cause of their flocking into the passage leading to the back gate where no orders given were to be heard through the crowds of the Portugueze females and several of the black militia who were pressing to get off shore which many of them did carrying what boats then remained at the wharf.

It was now confidently affirmed that the enemy were attempting to force our barriers which would give them possession of the whole part of our parade by the water side. On which the Governour called several times to have the gates of our factory house shut but to no purpose, nor could he obtain any detachment to work the field pieces placed by the water side to defend those barriers. In this tumult the ships and vessels were all dropping down below the fort without orders and several persons had then quitted the factory which made it appear utterly impossible (with only about two hundred and fifty forces within our walls and an incumbrance now remaining of at least eight hundred women, children, and their attendants) to make any retreat, the method of doing it being frustrated by the desertion and carrying away of the boats intended for that purpose in case of necessity, had been agreed on the night before, though then unsurmountable difficulties occurred to everyone in the performance of it when it was universally allowed the fort was not tenable with so small a quantity of ammunition remaining, above half of which was then said to be useless and as there was nothing to be

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

expected from the known disposition of the Nabob but the utmost cruelty to be inflicted, these reasons made it appear justifiable and necessary to the Governour to provide for his own safety. About eleven in the forenoon as he saw his staying any longer could be of no service and had no hopes of being able to make a general retreat as a small space of time before when he was by the line of guns by the water side he only saw one *budgerow*[1] which was full of people and an empty *pawnsway*[2] which he went on board of soon afterwards with Captain Grant and Mr. O'Hara, many having before quitted the shore and Captain Minchin and Mr. Mackett then getting into a *budgerow* and such as could find any conveyance lost no time to provide for their escape (from a merciless foe) crouding to the wharf for that purpose. The impossibility of a general retreat being made every conveyance, ships and vessels, being moving down the river made the President conclude on the step he now took, firmly imagining every individual would embrace any occasion which should offer to follow him. In this situation he was fired on by the enemy with small arms and fire arrows from the Company's House, Dockhead, and from the shore as far as any European houses reached in his passage down the river to the ship *Dadley*, on board of which ship were the majority of our women and some of our militia with Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, Holmes, Sumner, Mapletoft and others, whom he informed of the situation of the forces remaining in the factory and of the numerous body of the Moors having for some time had possession of the Company's House and other places adjacent to the fort, and that he saw all hopes of a retreat was cut off unless we could send vessels and boats to favour the escape of those remaining behind, which were computed to be about two hundred besides the wounded, on which orders were immediately sent to the Company's ship *Prince George* to lay before the factory (she then being on her way down from Baag Bazar where she was before stationed). Two sloops and what boats we could speak with were also told to proceed up the river, but by reason of the smart fire which was kept on them from the water side and from the houses built there by this intended succour did not reach the fort so that no resource was left for their safety but some extra-

[1] A kind of native house-boat. [2] A passenger-boat.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

ordinary event, it appearing to us they had no means for their escape, therefore that they would be necessitated to surrender themselves up to the mercy of the Moors or dye by their walls. Nevertheless we remained all this night a little below the factory to observe if we could be any ways assisting to our forces shut up there, and used all possible means by large promises to any sloops or boats we could then speak with to persuade them to attempt proceeding up, which Captain Nicholson in the *Hunter* schooner essayed but before he reached the distance of the Dockhead the *lascars* threatened to throw themselves overboard and would not assist in the working of the vessel, which obliged him to return to us. At three in the afternoon we had the mortification to observe that the Company's ship had run ashore and from advice afterwards we were informed the *lascars* had deserted her and that she had only one anchor remaining. At the close of day the Dockhead, Company's House and Mr. Cruttenden's appeared in flames and so great was the fire and smoke that the fort could not be distinguished. In the night flames were perceived throughout the town. A more wretched and helpless situation could not happen in any siege to the forces within the walls surrounded by the enemy and fire, no prospect of a retreat, a certainty that the Moors would be cruel, and starving in the midst of plenty for want of proper people to dress any provisions.

On Sunday the 20th June in the morning the smoke from the fire kindled in the night being dispersed we plainly observed numbers of the Moors on the water side adjacent to the factory, and by accounts since the enemy had killed a great many of our people on the curtains and bastions from their adjacent houses and by their getting on the top of the Church which obliged most of our men to abandon that side of the fort; that about four in the afternoon a Moor came running up to the factory as if he wanted to parley. When Mr. Holwell appeared on the ramparts the Moorman declared the Nabob had given orders to cease firing, requesting we would not commit any further hostilities, and an accommodation might be brought about. On this Mr. Holwell ordered all the souldiery who had been on duty for two days and nights to refresh themselves with sleep, but they had scarcely betaken themselves to rest when the fort was scaled at several

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

places and numbers of the enemy were entered within the factory who had planted several small flags on the bamboos close under the walls and being likewise furnished with small ladders they mounted our walls with precipitation scarce credible to Europeans. This piece of treachery in the Nabob by which means an opportunity was given for his men quietly to possess our bastions and curtains left no room for any further opposition on our side, yet the men remaining stood to their arms with great resolution until they were threatened by a *jemidar* that if they fired they would be all cut to pieces but that if they quietly surrendered the Nabob had given orders for their being well used, upon which most of the military threw down their arms, a few excepted who lost their lives in persisting to make a resistance. About an hour afterwards Souragud Dowlet entered the factory and held a kind of *Durbar* there to receive the compliments of his officers, among whom was Monsieur Saint Jacques the renegado Frenchman before mentioned who had the chief command of the artillery. The prisoners were brought before him and implored his mercy, when he was carried to another place where Mr. Holwell was conducted to him with his hands bound. Omichund and Kissendass were released and permitted to pay their respects to the Nabob and it is reported that the former's houses were during the siege guarded and protected by the enemies' forces from plunder. Thus was the loss of our Settlement compleated and Calcutta destroyed and pillaged by an enemy hitherto contemptible and who shewed themselves at this time of the cruellest disposition, for some of our souldiers having made too free with liquor were riotous, which occasioned the Nabob to order every person his prisoner to be confined without distinction from Mr. Holwell down to the common militia. His people, having no compassion on our sufferings, thrust them into the Black Hole, a very small place with little or no air, in which were put near two hundred persons without water or any kind of provisions, and so pent up were they as to be forced to trample one upon another. The prodigious heat joined to the noisome stench of several wounded men who were put in with them and who had no relief at hand was sufficient of itself to put an end to their miserable beings having been shut up from nine in the evening until seven in the morning of the 21st June,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

when there were not left alive more than twenty-five out of the number shut up, among these seven or eight Company's servants and officers, all the rest, except those who had been so fortunate as to be furnished with the means of an escape and those who fell on the bastions, ramparts and outposts, having perished in this inhuman and ignominious manner. The Laboratory and part of the factory house was that night set on fire.

All hopes vanishing whereby any relief could be given to those remaining in the factory, the several ships and vessels fell down to Surman's garden within sight of Calcutta and there lay until the 21st June in the morning when it was essayed to pass Tannah's fort, but such was the haste that everyone was in to pass that the misfortune befell us to lose the *Neptune* snow and *Calcutta* sloop, which were immediately plundered by the enemy and obliged the remaining fleet consisting of the following ships and vessels to stand back (namely the *Dadley*, *Fame*, *Lively* grabb, *Diligence*, *Ann* snow, *Fortune* ketch, and *London* sloop with five other small vessels belonging to the black merchants) on account of the confusion there was in working the vessels. About five in the evening the *Bombay* frigate and *Speedwell* from Bombay joined us, on which ships Tannah's fort had fired in their passage up, where they had fifteen cannon mounted. The wind at this time increasing and being favourable we again weighed and stood through against the tide, the *Speedwell* losing one man and two wounded. The 24th June we passed Bougbouggee being arrived [? joined] by the *Success* gally arrived from Madrass. The enemies forces were also lodged there and batteries were erecting. This day the *Diligence* run aground and was plundered and we found orders were come to every head person at the villages to prevent our being supplied with provisions, of which we were very short not having a week's sustenance in the fleet of either food, wood or water, every vessel being crouded with men, women and children, country born Portugueze. This sad prospect added to our late unhappiness determined us to set ashore such who had no connection with the Europeans and to proceed to Fulta where the Dutch have a small residence, in hopes of supplying ourselves with necessaries of life and anchors, which we were much in want of, where we arrived the 26th June with an addition to our fleet of the Honourable

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Company's sloop *Syren* from Madrass and another ship *Speedwell* from Bombay. At this place we agreed to remain in hopes of expected succours from Madrass and for intelligence from some of our servants or others who had been taken prisoners, and as it was represented as a place of safety for our ships and vessels and that we were supplied by stealth with small quantities of provision. Here shall be finished a narrative of a most unhappy event with every fact enumerated to our present recollection, abiding herein in the path of truth. As any other occurrence rise in the memory which have been transacted or passed over, or future intelligence of springs which actuated Souragud Dowlet to make so lawless an attack on the English, they shall hereafter appear as a supplement hereto. Dated at Fulta this 19th July, 1756.

ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR.

67. *Declaration by Francis Sykes.*

I Francis Sykes being a Company's servant at Cossimbuzar do declare (without the least partiality to any gentleman whatever) what he knows (*sic*) concerning Kissendass leaving Muxadavad and taking up his residence in Calcutta.

About the middle of March when Alliverdy Cawn, the late Nabob, was languishing of a fatal disorder, a number of inhabitants were daily hiring houses both in Cossimbuzar and in all other places where they were to be had. At this very time Rajahbullub a man of considerable wealth and power applied to William Watts, Esq., Chief at Cossimbuzar for his interest to get his son Kissendass and his family admitted into Calcutta till his wife was brought to bed; who afterwards was going to Jaggernaut Pagoda. The Chief accordingly wrote to the Governour and Mr. Manningham to have him admitted, which was accordingly done by Mr. Manningham, the Governour being at that time at Ballasore.

On the 9th of April the Nabob died when Surragud Dowlat took upon him the Government, but was for a few days opposed by the *Begum*, wife of the late *Chutah Nabob*.[1] This Rajahbullub was her acting person amongst her forces and one whom she consulted and advised with in the desperate situation of affairs, but her forces

[1] The young Nawab, or heir to the throne. Here refers to Nawajis Muhammad, eldest uncle of Siraj-uddaula.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

being discontented, were in a very short time brought over to Sürragud Dowlat by his threats and the solicitations of others, when Rajahbullub and all his family that were in the city were brought into disgrace and a spy sent to Calcutta supposed with no other view than to observe Kissendass and his family. The Chief's writing to the Governour and Mr. Manningham to admit Kissendass was never made publick or any consultation held at Cossimbuzar thereupon, but that as soon as the gentlemen came to hear of it they thought it a very imprudent step to shew favour to him or to any person in the *Begum's* service, being not the least prospect that she should ever come to the Government and more so, as our *vackeel* was several times sent for by the Nabob who said that if we gave the *Begum* any assistance or protected any of her people he would highly resent it. From what had passed and by the false representations of the spy to the Nabob concerning our building new fortifications, the Nabob wrote a letter to the Governour signifying his displeasure at our proceedings therein. The Governour answered it which was enclosed to the Chief of Cossimbuzar for him to forward the Nabob. Upon its arrival the *vackeel* explained it, when I do declare to have heard Mr. Watts two or three times mention he thought it a very proper answer and, agreeable to orders, sent it to the Nabob. This is all I can bring to remembrance concerning Kissendass taking up his residence in Calcutta.

68. *Letter from Mr. William Lindsay to Mr. Robert Orme concerning the loss of Calcutta, dated 'Syren' sloop, off Fulta, — July,* 1756.

DEAR SIR,—It is hardly possible for me to express with what concern I sit down to write you this letter, the subject of which being nothing less than to give you a short account of such a scene of destruction and desolation as makes me tremble when I think of the consequences that it will be attended with not only to every private gentleman in India but to the English Nation in general.

I wrote you in my last the Nabob was marching against us with a very large army and a number of cannon. Four thousand of his army attacked our redoubt at Perrings on Wednesday the 16th of June with several pieces of cannon but were repulsed by Ensign Picard with about 50 men. The next day they made a bridge at Cow

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Cross and at several other places and vast numbers entered our bounds plundering and setting fire to every house. In the evening the whole Town was surrounded. It will be here proper to mention we had raised several batteries, one at the Court House, one by the saltpetre *godown* and another by Mr. Burrows his house, upon each of which were mounted one nine and one six pounder besides which there was breastworks raised at all the small avenues between the batteries. Several thousands this night got into the great *Buzar* where they murthered every person they met and plundered and set fire to all the houses.

On Friday morning the enemy endeavoured to enter at several of the small avenues and at the battery by the saltpetre *godown*, where they got such a warm reception as obliged them to retire. The enemy about 8 o'clock were advancing down the road opposite to the Goal with two large pieces of cannon, where they were very warmly received by the advance guard from the Court House battery, which battery was commanded by Captains Clayton and Holwell. The dispute lasted for several hours, but the enemy getting possession of the adjacent houses galled our men so much that they had an order from the battery to retire into the Goal. This was between 11 and 12 o'clock. There continued a very warm fire to and from the Goal till about 1 o'clock. Many of our men being killed they were obliged to retire to the battery; the enemy lost no advantage on this but immediately took possession of the Goal, the Playhouse, and all the other houses that overlooked the Court House battery, on which they kept a continual fire of musquetry. By this time the enemy had obliged our men to retire from the tops of the houses adjacent to the other batterys where they were placed to prevent the enemy's taking possession of them, and, notwithstanding we kept a warm fire from the bastions of the fort on the several houses the enemy had got possession of and threw several shells into them, we never were able to dislodge them from one house. About four o'clock Mr. Holwell came to the factory and acquainted the Governor that there was so warm a fire upon the battery that he was stationed at, that they would be obliged to leave it unless there was means found to dislodge the enemy from the houses that overlooked them, and that they had got into some [upon] which they could not bring one cannon

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

at the battery to bear. The Governor and the other gentlemen being sensible of the consequence of quitting that battery ordered a reinforcement of seventy men and two eighteen pounders to march to their assistance, but before they could get the length of that battery Captain Clayton had spiked all the cannon and had beat a retreat (from this one action we may greatly impute the loss of Calcutta) upon which we heard the enemy make a shout and immediately hoisted their colours upon that battery. This occasioned all the other batterys being recalled. Now for the first time we began to look upon ourselves in a dangerous way. You must remember very well the situation of our fort, a range of *godowns*, one end of which joined to the southwest and the other end to the south east bastions which prevented their flanking them, *godowns* so weak that it was even dangerous venturing four pounders upon them. The Company's House not only overlooking them but also the two bastions. The Church overlooked the north east and south east bastions and also the curtain to the land. Mr. Eyre's house entirely commanding the north east bastion as did also Mr. Cruttenden's the north west bastion and the curtain to the northward. All our *cooleys* and *lascars* having now left us we was in a very distressed condition.

It was thought absolutely necessary for us to take possession of the above houses which was accordingly done. It is almost impossible to conceive the confusion there was in the fort there being at least two thousand women and children, nor was there any method to prevent their coming in as the military and militia declared they would not fight unless their families were admitted in the factory. It was now about 7 o'clock when a report was brought from the Company's House that the party could not longer dwell therein as there was a continual fire upon them from the next house. It was now thought necessary to send our ladies on board some of the ships which was accordingly done, Messrs. Manningham and Frankland conducting some of them. The enemy began now to fire very warmly upon the fort from all quarters. Our garrison began to murmur for want of provisions, having not a single cook in the fort notwithstanding there had been several lodged there on purpose to dress their provisions. The whole garrison quite fatigued having been under arms great part of the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

preceeding night. Many of the military and militia having got at liquor began to be very mutinous and under no command, having drawn bayonets on several of their officers. About 12 o'clock news was brought us that the enemy were going to storm the fort, there being ladders preparing close under the range of *godowns* to the southward, immediately every person repaired to the curtain where we absolutely heard them at work. Orders were now given to beat to arms but none of the Armenians or Portugueze appeared, having hid themselves in different parts of the fort. We threw some hand granades amongst the enemy which soon dislodged them. About two o'clock in the morning the 19th June, there being several military and many private gentlemen present, a council of war was held and every one present (being sensible of our situation and of the enemy we had to deal with, expecting no quarter if taken prisoners) was at liberty to give his opinion. The Captain of the Artillery was first called upon to inform us in what a situation our ammunition was in, who replied if we fired at the rate we had done the preceeding day there was not sufficient in the whole for above two days firing and great part of that damp and unfit for service. This one circumstance put it out of all dispute that we should be obliged to retreat or capitulate within that time. As for the latter there appeared very little prospect of success, his first demand being nothing less (as Mr. Watts informed us) than pulling down all our fortifications, paying him seven *corore* of rupees and delivering up our guns and ammunition, and living in his country on the same footing as Armenians. These and many other circumstances being thoroughly canvassed it was the unanimous opinion of everyone present that the fort was not tenable and the only safety we had for our lives was to retreat on board of our ships. Mr. Holwell was of opinion the retreat ought to be made immediately but all the rest differed from him for these reasons, first that it would be impossible to call the parties from the houses and get them shipped off before daylight, secondly as the flood was just set in they would be greatly exposed to the enemy's fire before they got on board of our ships. It was therefore agreed to continue in the fort till next night and then to make a regular retreat if possible. It was now thought high time to acquaint

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Messrs. Manningham and Frankland of the scituation of affairs in the factory and I was accordingly appointed and let out at the back gate for that purpose. I told the gentlemen that as they were resolved to retreat the following night and as I conceived there would be the utmost confusion in the execution of it, let them take the greatest precautions, through the unruliness of the military many of whom were in liquor and at least 1,500 women and children in the factory, very few boats at the *Get* and some of the ships moved down to be out of the way of their fire rockets, and as they were all sensible I could be of very little service in the fort and in case of any confusion on the retreat I should stand no chance of getting off, that if they thought these reasons were sufficient for me to continue on board I would remain there, to which the Governor and Council then present assented. What followed afterwards I shall inform you as it has been represented to me. At daybreak the whole garrison was in the utmost confusion, many of them in liquor, the Portugueze and Armenians so dispirited that it was with the utmost difficulty any of them made their appearance. Before ten o'clock in the morning we were obliged to recall our men from the houses adjacent, which the enemy immediately possessed themselves of. About this time many of the voluntiers and other gentlemen went on board of the ships. Chests of money and coral brought to the *Get* and were left there as there was no geting them into the boats such crowds of people were wanting to get off. About 12 o'clock the Governor perceiving all the boats gone from the *Get* but one and that numbers of the enemy were already got to the riverside, this convinced him it would be impossible to make any regular retreat and, deeming it highly necessary and justifiable to everyone to look out for their own safety, this induced him to go on board of that boat on which there was kept a continual fire till he had got on board of the *Dodley*. There was laying a little above the factory the Company's ship the *Prince George*. The gentlemen left in the factory finding all retreat cutt off shutt the gates and were resolved to sell their lives as dear as they could. They made a signal for the *Prince George* to come abreast of the factory but she having only one anchor and cable run ashore and was lost. The enemy had now possession of every house adjacent

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

to the fort from which there was one continual fire of musquetry upon the factory. There was in the fort many Company's servants. Mr. Holwell after the Governor was gone took the charge of the factory. It was much against his inclination being there, two gentlemen having carried away the *budgerow* he had waiting for him. I mention this as I understand he made a merit in staying when he found he could not get off. The gentlemen in the fort being now quite desperate fought like mad men. On Sunday morning there was above forty men killed on one bastion. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon there was a Moorman came under the walls with a flag of truce and told them the Nabob would cease firing and desired they would as he had proposals to make for an accommodation, which they readily embraced and most of them retired from the bastions to take some refreshments, of which they were in great want. About half an hour after this the Moors scaled the walls on all quarters in a manner almost incredible to Europeans. Now the gentlemen looked upon their scituation as the most desperate. Lieutenant Blagg defended the bastion he was upon till he and his men were cutt to pieces. This officer behaved with the greatest bravery. The gentlemen below drew out and were resolved to die rather than be taken when one of the Nabob's *jemindars* advanced and told them they should not be hurt if they would lay down their arms, the soldiers immediately grounded theirs and the gentlemen were obliged to do the same. About an hour after the Nabob entered the factory and held a *Durbar* to receive the compliments of his officers upon his success. At first they used the gentlemen pretty well but some of the soldiers geting drunk they were all ordered into the Black Hole without distinction to the number of about two hundred. This prison was not large enough to hold one fourth part of the number there. They were pent up from nine at night till six in the morning without anything to drink and the window so small that there was hardly any air. When the door was opened there was not more than twenty or twenty five alive the rest being stifled. Among the living were Messrs. Holwell, Court, Cooke, Lushington, Burdett, and one or two more gentlemen, the rest was soldiers and Portigueze. Holwell was immediately carried to the Nabob and the rest had orders to go where they pleased. Cooke and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Lushington took the *peon* at his word and immediately set out, arived on board of the ships the same night, we then laying a little above Bugge Buggee. We had a very warm fire upon us as we past Tanna's Fort and several of the ships received damage as they past Buggee Buggee.

Now to give you an account of your concerns in my hands, your tuthenague is entirely lost. I informed you in my last I had wrote to Mr. Holwell and beged he would give me authority to lade it on board some of the ships. I told him I would deliver it to him if he thought he could secure it for you. He said he had no general power of attorney, therefore could give me no authority but that he looked upon it as safe in the Company's House as on board any of the ships. When I heard the Nabob had past Houghly I came to a resolution to send as much of it on board the *Neptune* as I possibly could, but then I could not get a single *cooley* or boat to carry it, and if it had gone it would have shared the same fate, as there was a Company's sloop run foul of her a little above Tannahs. They went ashore and were boarded sword in hand by a vast number of people and plundered in our sight. She had the greatest part of her Persia cargoe on board and I believe a quantity of *couries* belonging to you which Holwell desired might remain on board. I have saved all the jewels deposited with me by Wedderburn on your account, also your Company's bond I had in possession. We hear all the Cossimbuzar gentlemen are in a prison at Muxadavad. That factory was plundered the day after it was taken, therefore the pearls belonging to you and Mr. Moses must also be lost. Your 6,000 rupees in Hastings' hands must have shared the same fate as the Company's *aurungs* are plundered. A few days before the attack on Calcutta, Manningham and Frankland sent to me to receive 4,000 rupees on your account. As I had no occasion for it I immediately sent to Holwell and desired he would send for that sum, his *banian* brought his receipt to me and I gave him mine to be delivered to the gentlemen. Mr. Manningham seeing Mr. Holwell's *banian* come for that sum paid him the ballance of your account. This Mr. Manningham has informed us of since in conversation. Let me assure you Sir, your loss gives me infinate concern. For my part I have lost the greatest part of my own fortune. I did not

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

save a single coat to my back and out of a large sum of money I had by me I was not able to get off but about 3,000 rupees, so great was the confusion. I have saved all my accounts which is more than any other person has done, hardly one saved anything but what was on his back. The Nabob has given Watts and Collet their liberty who are now at Chandernagore and it is said have liberty to trade. We hear the Moors have pulled down the factory house at Calcutta and all the adjacent houses to the fort. No Europeans upon any account to remain there. The name changed *Allyenagore*. Cotton sold after taking of the place at 5 rupees per *maund* and *couries* at 12 *cawn*[1] for a rupee. The Nabob in his march back without any ceremony sent 100 men into the French factory with pickaxes &c. to pull down their fortifications. They wrote the Nabob they had orders from their Masters to fortify themselves and that they could not deliver up their guns but if he chuse to take them he might, for that they were only merchants and not come there to fight, and further said they were ready to leave the country if their living there was disagreeable to him. However he has made it up with them for the present upon their paying a large sum of money. In the same manner the Dutch came off, but neither of them can carry on the least trade without a *dustick* from the *Phausdar* of Houghley. We have wrote several letters to the *Durbar* to endeavour to get leave to go back to Calcutta. I am as sensible it would be of the utmost consequence to the Company their having even the shadow of a Settlement here as any person, but what security can the Nabob give us we shall not be made a sacrifice of when we are in his power? From his known character there is no relyance upon his word, and to live under a Moor's Government death is preferable. For my own part I am resolved to enter into no Don Quixote adventures. What could induce him to proceed to such lengths as he has done already? He has got a large garrison in our fort and Monickchund is made *Phausdar*. I hardly think all the force we have in India will be sufficient to re-settle us here unto any footing of security, we being almost as much in want of everything as when we first settled here. I don't foresee anything that will prevent my coming up to Madras in August, and though

[1] One *cawn* or *kahan* = 1280 *cowries* or *kawris*.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

I look upon the Company in such a scituation as to expect no further favours from them I shall not chuse to go home if there is any certainty of our being re-established here. The Moors declared to some of our people that has since escaped that we killed above seven thousand men. This is also confirmed by the French and Dutch and further that there are two thousand in the hospital at Houghly. I think it impossible we can have killed near that number. One of the *zemindars* we took prisoner declared to us that the Nabob's army consisted of 18,000 horse and 30,000 foot, three thousand elephants and camels and a large Train of artillery, to oppose which force we had as follows, military 180, of these not above 40 Europeans, and voluntiers 50, militia 60 Europeans, militia 150 Portugueze and Armenians, artillery 35, voluntiers 40 consisting of sea officers and helmsmen In all 515. The Dutch inform us that when the Nabob past Chincera there was at least 100,000 men with him. He brought from Muxadavad 7,000 men as plunderers, these were the people that first entered our bounds. We have undergone the greatest fatigues since we left Four [? the Fort] having had hardly anything but rice for some days. Not only the whole country has had orders that we should not be supplied with any provisions but also the French and Dutch, and though there was a Dutch Europe ship arrived a few days ago we got hardly anything out of her. In the night a few of the natives brings off provisions to us by stealth. I believe I must by this time have tired you. I have only had a short warning to scrawl this letter over. I request you will forward the inclosed to my uncle Murray by the first dispatch for Europe either French or English. If the *Delawar* should not be sailed and the Madeira ship arrived, be so good as to buy me a pipe of Madeira if you can get the Captain of that ship to carry it for my uncle and debit my account for the purchase. I have received your favour of the 9th of June but at present cannot enter into business. What has happened to us seems to me at some times like a dream. I am with the utmost sincerity,

Dear Sir, Your affectionate and obliged servant, WILLIAM LINDSAY.

P.S. I take the liberty of inclosing you a power of attorney

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and beg you will act for me and receive from Messrs. Adams and Edwards what concerns of mine they have in their hands (agreable to my directions to them). If Messrs. Clark and Russoll tenders you any money please to receive it. Several disputes amongst ourselves puts everything in great confusion. Mr. Manningham's going up to the Coast was the occasion of most of the Company's servants and inhabitants throwing in a Remonstrance to the Governor, setting forth he was an improper person as he left the fort before there was any retreat resolved upon and would not come back and attend the Council when sent for. He and Mr. Frankland has been very near throwing up the service. I wish I had not signed it. My intentions were very different from the effects it has had, being only to prevent him from going to the Coast as I looked upon his presence absolutely necessary in case of an accident happening to Mr. Drake. *Entre nous* everything that was set forth in the Remonstrance can be proved, at least several people offers to take their oath of it and upon their veracity I signed, WILLIAM LINDSAY.

Company's Servants Saved.[1]

Messrs. Drake.
Manningham.
Frankland.
Pearks.
Mackett.
Sumner.
Ellis.
Billers.
Lindsay.
O'Haro.
Vasmer.
Cooke.
Lushington.
Charlton.
Leyster.
Senior.
Tooke.
Messrs. Orr.
Gray Senior.
Gray Junior.
Fullerton.

Arrived from Jugdea.

Messrs. Amayett.
Flodell.[2]
Smyth.
Hay.
Midleton.
Officer Mure.

Arrived from Ballasore.

Messrs. Boddam.
English.
Officer Keen.

[1] This list follows Lindsay's letter, but it is not quite certain that it belongs to it.
[2] Pleydell.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Gentlemen at Dacca said to be safe in the French Factory there.

Messrs. Becher.
Scrafton.
Hyndman.
Carteir.
Waller.
Johnstone.
Officer Cudmore.

Military Officers Saved.

Messrs. Minchin.
Grant.

Gentlemen said to be taken up with the Nabob in irons.

Messrs. Holwell.
Court.
Burdett.
Ensign Walcot.

Gentlemen said to be in irons in a prision at Muxadavad.

Messrs. Batson.
Hastings.
Sykes.
Chambers.
Watts Junior.
Marriot.

69. *Translation of a letter to M. Demontorcin, dated Chandernagore, 1 August, 1756.*[1]

In spite of a fever which has been troubling me for nearly two months, I am going to give you, my dear de Montorcin, an account of the most terrible revolution which has occurred in Bengal since the establishment of the Kingdom.

You have without doubt heard of the death of Aliverdi Khan, Nawab of this country, and that his grandson, Siraj-uddaula has succeeded him. In proportion as the former was naturally good and pacific, in the same proportion is the latter cruel, restless and sanguinary. He joins to these unworthy qualities the most sordid avarice and the most extravagant inhumanity. I will give you some instances of this that you may judge for yourself, and then resume the thread of what I propose to tell you.[2] . . . In short there are a thousand other instances, the one worse than the other, which I prefer to omit out of respect to his

[1] Bibliothèque Nationale, MSS., Paris. This curious letter is written in such very bad French that in many places the meaning is by no means clear. The writer spares neither the British nor the Moors, who were both, in his eyes, capable of any crime. It is given here simply to illustrate the outrageous comments of the French to which Mr. Young refers. *See* No. 48.

[2] These instances are merely amplifications of those mentioned by Mr. Drake in his narrative, and may therefore be omitted.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

rank being besides persuaded that I have said sufficient to make you understand his character. So let us return [to our subject]. As soon as he was made Nawab his first care was to strike down those grandees of his Court who seemed to endanger his newly established power. Accordingly he ruined them, so that they might not be in a condition to injure him, and in order that they might owe entirely to his gift such consideration as they might henceforth enjoy. This was certainly good policy, for, by this means, he has strengthened himself in his government. However he could not reduce them all, and this is a proof of it. The *Begum* of Moti Jhil, daughter-in-law[1] of Aliverdi Khan his grand-father, who would have been like him a claimant for the Nawabship if Aliverdi Khan had not chosen him as his heir presumptive, took up arms, not to attack him but to put herself in a state of defence. Knowing the natural wickedness of her nephew she foresaw clearly that she would have everything to fear from a monster like him, and, for their greater safety, placed all her treasures in the care of the English, in the same way as did one Raja Balav who had for a long time been Siraj-uddaula's most bitter enemy, and who took the side of the *Begum*, but Siraj-uddaula was not yet sufficiently firm on his throne to risk a war so soon after his accession, as he feared he might force people to declare openly for one party or other, which was the more probable as he was then threatened by an army of 80,000 men, (sent, they say, by the *Mogol King* to make his grandfather pay considerable arrears of tribute) which was commanded by the son of that famous Mansur Ali Khan, of whom you may have heard people talk. He is as good and brave a general as his father, and has well disciplined troops. He had nearly reached Patna when Aliverdi Khan died. Siraj-uddaula was also threatened by the Marathas. All these reasons induced him to come to terms with the *Begum* of Moti Jhil, all the more so as the *Begum* of his grandfather, Aliverdi Khan, strongly urged him to do so, representing the danger he ran of being driven from his throne if he engaged in a war like this without examining whether it was just or unjust. Consequently she spoke to her daughter, widow of Nawajis Muhammad Khan, who had been Nawab of Dacca and had died eight months before from taking a little

[1] She was really Aliverdi Khan's daughter.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

soup which Aliverdi Khan gave him to ensure the kingdom to this young prince. His aunt, this same *Begum* of Moti Jhil, of whom we have spoken above, and widow of this Nawajis Muhammad Khan, willingly agreed to the accommodation which was unexpectedly presented to her, and the affair terminated amicably by her paying over a sum of money. And it is said it was this money which caused the son of Mansur Ali Khan to retire from this country without committing any act of hostility. We were beginning to flatter ourselves that there would be no revolutions in this country after such an arrangement, but the petulant character of this madman ought to have convinced us of the contrary. In fact about two or three months ago he learned that his aunt and Raja Balav had placed their money in the charge of the English. He was extremely vexed, and in consequence sent an order to the English to restore those treasures, as well as the children of Raja Balav, who had been put under the protection of the English flag because the Nawab had seized their father. On being refused he sent 6,000 horsemen to surround the fort which they have at Cassimbazar, but the people there prepared to stand an attack. The Nawab was greatly astonished at this, as if the fort ought to have surrendered at his first summons. He sent another very considerable body of troops with several pieces of cannon, and erected a battery at the angle of one of the bastions of the fort. The English allowed him to do this being persuaded that the affair would terminate amicably. But the Nawab thought very differently, and ordered one of his generals to attack at once. This general, named Raja Durlabh Ram, pledged his head that he would capture the fort alone, mounted his elephant and presented himself before the fort gate to break it down. The English seeing this stupid blustering had it opened to him. He was about to enter, but when he saw 4 pieces of cannon in the entry of the gate, the gunners with matches lighted and ready to fire on him, and all the troops under arms, all this preparation, I say, frightened him and made him retrace his steps with much more promptitude than he had shown in advancing. He said to the Nawab, ' Prince, these people cannot be captured without much bloodshed, so it would be better for you to come to terms with them.' The Nawab was not very far away, and he repeated his

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

orders to the Raja to make an attack; but this general, the declared enemy of the English and extremely desirous of their ruin, immediately sent word to Mr. Watts, who commanded in the place, to come and talk with the Nawab to whom he had already spoken in favour of the English, saying that the affair would then terminate amicably, and swearing by Muhammad, by his sword, and by his beard &c. that no harm should be done to him. The Council was immediately assembled and nearly all the members agreed that he ought to take the advice given by Raja Durlabh Ram. He started immediately taking only his surgeon as interpreter. While this trickery went on the Nawab knew nothing of what was happening, and was thinking of sending word to Mr. Watts to come and see him, but to come with the dignity of a Chief about to arrange an accommodation, when suddenly a *chobdar*[1] of the Nawab announced the English Chief. The Nawab immediately said, 'Things are changed now, without doubt Raja Durlabh Ram has made him a prisoner of war,' and Mr. Watts appeared before him in a condition the more humiliating because his hands had been tied behind his back. The Nawab refused to listen to him, ordered him to be closely guarded, and immediately marched with the rest of his army towards the place and summoned it to surrender, to which the Second-in-command and the Council agreed, fear having seized them, so that they gave up the place without firing a shot. They were seized, tied up like pigs, and exposed with 30 white soldiers and 20 *topasses* whom they had, in the *Cachari*[2] or public *Chaudri*, to the derision and insult of an infamous mob. As for the wife of the Chief, they sent her to the fort which we have there, and demanded a receipt for her from the chief, Mr. Law. There was found in the place 84 cannons, 30 millions(?) of powder, 5 balls for each gun, a quantity of grape shot, and a quantity of booty. I forgot to tell you that the English officer blew out his brains with his two pistols, holding one in each hand, when he surrendered the place. An act of noble despair apparently in his estimation, but one which I consider mere weakness. I would at any rate have avenged my death in the blood of my enemy by spreading my shots as widely as I could, and I would have died arms in hand. That is what I should think

[1] A mace or staff bearer.

[2] Here means the Public Offices.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

a glorious death, and a death worthy of a gentleman. The Nawab, proud of his victory, proposed to himself nothing less than to chase the English out of his country, and determined to go and take Calcutta, the capital of the English in this country and a very strong place. Accordingly he wrote to the other European nations to assist him in accomplishing his purpose, which was refused him, so as not to violate our treaties in Europe. Besides none of us were able to give him any help, especially ourselves as we had only about 60 foreigners (? sepoys) and perhaps 150 *topasses*. Further we feared he might attack us in passing, as the rumour ran that way, though he never ceased assuring M. Renault, that he wished to raise our nation above all the others. The specimen of treason practised on the English Chief gave us reason to fear he would treat us in the same way. Our refusal and that of the Dutch did not prevent his persisting in his design. He sent on his *diwan* with an army of 12,000 men, and started himself some time after with the rest of his army. He sent word to us, as he passed, that we had nothing to fear, that he loved us much, that M. Dupleix was his grandfather, M. De Leyrit his father, M. Renault his brother and M. Law, Chief at Cassimbazar his son, but that he begged us again and again to give him assistance which M. Renault refused, explaining the reasons which prevented him from doing so. Whether he pretended or really believed in the reasons given him, he appeared to be content with them, though he often came back to the charge. All this time we were fortifying ourselves as well as we could, in case he intended to attack us on his return from Calcutta. As for the English they awaited him firmly, and appeared determined to defend themselves to the death, to punish properly the immoderate pride of this young prince, and to revenge themselves for the infamy with which they had been covered by the surrender of the Fort of Cassimbazar. Every man took up arms, and the English had probably 500 Europeans and 700 other people, half castes[1] and *topasses*, all very resolute to fight, and they had ships, I say, 6 or 7 very well armed which were intended to incommode the enemy. They barricaded the streets, raised considerable batteries, and built redoubt upon

[1] The word in my copy is 'Manillois.' This might mean Malay Sepoys, or it might be a mistake for 'Mestis,' or half-castes.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

redoubt. All this appeared certainly more than enough for the destruction of the Nawab's army, though it was composed of 60,000 men, 100 white soldiers, 250 cannons, and 500 elephants; however the result proved the contrary, as you will see by what follows, owing to the knavery of Mr. Drake the Governor and of the Commandant of the troops. The Nawab advanced only slowly, it seemed as if the closer he approached the town the more gently he went. His army marched unwillingly, his people murmured loudly against him and said that he was taking them to be butchered and that they could never capture the place. These just murmurs of the army came to the ears of the Nawab; he paid no attention to them. He even treated very cavalierly a person who spoke to him of them saying, 'I do not doubt that thou art afraid thyself, I am not astonished at it for thou art a Bengali coward.'—As a matter of fact this person was one of his dependent *rajas*.—'Learn then, to-day, that we must conquer or die,' he said to him, not wishing to give up his enterprise, 'for the rest, I will teach thee I am not Aliverdi Khan, my grandfather, nor any other of my predecessors, but I am Siraj-uddaula, and I do exactly as I please, and it will cost any man his life who dares to suggest anything contrary to my wish or intention.' In short on the 17th he arrived at about a league from Calcutta and encamped, and from the next morning there were several small skirmishes, in which however he lost many men and even several persons of distinction. On the 19th the English made a sortie of about 50 men, commanded by Monsieur de la Beaume, whom you have seen at Pondicherry, and who did marvels. He killed a prodigious number of the enemy, and I believe that on that day it would have been all up with the [Nawab's] army if Mr. Drake the Governor, who wanted nothing less than his ruin, had not sent him [Monsieur Le Beaume] word to retire immediately. The Moors were astonished at a retreat so unexpected and which gave them so much pleasure; their surprise was still more agreeable when they saw that the town was being abandoned to them. It was in fact of too great extent for effective defence, but what was the use of having made all those barricades, redoubts and batteries, to retire after having beaten the enemy into a fort, ordinarily the last resort after defeat? Indeed they had a

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

very different design in their hearts—but the town was in a minute full of the enemy and of plunderers who set it on fire everywhere. During this time, the English prudently embarked on the ships all the ladies and the valuables, and drove out the natives in their service whom they had sheltered in the fort, and made several little sorties in which they killed a number of people. The Nawab began to despair of his enterprise, when suddenly on the 20th, towards 3 o'clock in the evening, he saw the English retire to their ships and embark in great disorder, and the Moorish flag flying on the fort. The army thought that the few people who had been sent to plunder the town must have taken the fort; they rushed upon it like madmen, but what was their surprise to see the gates closed and the sentinels at their posts. A single cannon shot, my dear fellow, a single discharge of grape-shot would have scattered this mob of men who did not know what to do, but at last the gates were opened to them, and nearly 200 men surrendered themselves ignominiously with their arms. The ships cut their cables and let themselves drop down with the tide, which was luckily in their favour, to get out of reach of the cannon, the wind being contrary. Without doubt such a singular event must seem extraordinary to you. You will be right for it is incomprehensible, but I am going to show you what was under the cards. Would you believe it, my dear fellow, that these Englishmen, unworthy to bear the name of Europeans, gave themselves up without firing a single gun in their fort, and that by common consent—excepting 4 or 5 men of distinction who did not wish to stain themselves by so black an action, and who preferred to sacrifice themselves to the fury of the Moors rather than consent to it, and who now actually have irons on their feet and hands. These unworthy wretches, I say, made this execrable agreement not merely after they were attacked but at the time when they were first threatened with war. What is this agreement? Nothing less, my dear fellow, than a most barefaced robbery. Here is the proof of it. They embarked the money deposited by the *Begum* of Moti Jil and Raja Balav, as well as immense sums which their merchants and private people had put in their charge, thinking that they and their fortunes would be safe with them. It is said that all the money which they are carrying off amounts

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

possibly to more than 4 *krors*. This is, without doubt, how these gentlemen reasoned, 'We owe much to the Moors, we are not rich, here is an opportunity of paying our debts and those of the Company and of enriching all of us, so do not let us miss the chance. We shall dishonour ourselves, it is true, in the opinion of foreigners, but what does that matter to us, so long as we have the money? Besides we shall assert loudly that the French assisted the Moors and so forced us to retire as we could not resist their fire.'[1]

I do not, it is true, know their sentiments from themselves, but what can one think of behaviour so dishonourable as theirs, if they are not of this nature? It is, indeed, the opinion of everybody, and even of the Moors, who are in despair at having missed capturing what was the real cause of the war, besides the conduct of Mr. Drake, the Governor, and of the Commandant of the troops proves clearly that such was their fashion of thinking, for they decamped on board the ships the first day of the attack, saying openly as they went off 'It is not possible to keep the fort, as the French have lent soldiers to the enemy. You can try, gentlemen,' they said to the English, 'to defend yourselves as best you can, we four[2] are going to retire as it is useless to fight,' but the next day the Council followed them. Their shameful flight, my dear fellow, covers all Europeans with a disgrace which they will never wipe out in this country; every one curses, detests and abhors them. They [ruin] by their flight perhaps 15,000 persons, at whose expense they enrich themselves without any remorse. They have committed, it is said, abominations, even to throwing their own children into the Ganges to prevent their being taken, so they said, by the Moors. God knows if it was not to get rid of them the more certainly.

After this disaster there arrived at Chandernagore a number of people of all kinds who were fleeing from the fury of the Moors. There were cries and lamentations which made the heart bleed. One woman was seen weeping for a son who was drowned

[1] The 100 whites referred to by the writer (p. 178) were deserters from Chandernagore. They managed the artillery, and it was the shot from their guns which placed the ships in danger and suggested the advisability of their moving.

[2] Refers to Messrs. Drake, Minchin, Manningham, and Frankland.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

whilst trying to escape, and four boys for their mother, killed or carried off by the Moors to satisfy their brutal and shameful passions. It was a general desolation. Terror had seized all the people in the country: they cried and ran about like senseless people, they exterminated with their curses the English and their posterity for carrying off their wealth, and causing the loss of their women, their children and all their relations. They besought again and again, some the Heavens and some their demons, that the ravishers of their goods might not profit thereby and that they might perish miserably, they and their ships. I firmly believed that their vows would be accomplished, for the English were not yet in safety, for the following reason. The Moors having seen them in flight sent [men] to erect batteries at two places on the river named Mackwa Tana and Budge-budge, the two narrowest portions of the river, and the ships being obliged to pass quite close to the batteries which they had made, there was reason to fear that they would be sunk, and it would have been all up with them, if these people had known how to aim a gun, for they were bound to be terribly embarrassed with all the women, who were likely to communicate their fear to the remainder of the soldiers and to the crews by the outcries they would have made, if they had been obliged to make a landing. In short whatever one may say, these gentlemen, especially Mr. Drake, will never free themselves from such an infamy, and Mr. Drake will never be able to deprive his nation of the right to hang him and all his Council. But, though this is the just punishment which they may look forward to, they passed on the 25th June the batteries which they had had reason to fear. We also learned the same day that the Nawab had made a considerable booty in Calcutta, that he had found all kinds of munitions of war, and weapons sufficient to arm 7 to 8 thousand men in European fashion. Judge, my dear fellow, what injury this does to the [French] nation. We learned also that he had sent a body of troops which was in reserve in the direction of Hugli, a Moorish town, to besiege Chinsurah, a Dutch colony 3 leagues away from us. The Nawab demanded from them only 12 *lakhs* as the price of his refraining from pulling down the four bastions of their fort and cutting down their flagstaff. We expected our turn when the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Dutch had finished with him. We were certainly not deceived in our conjectures, for on the 26th the siege was raised from before Chinsurah, the Dutch having paid 4½ *lakhs*, and the same day there came one of the Nawab's *jemadars*, a kind of Captain, with 50 people, to pull down our bastions and cut down our flagstaff, if we refused to pay 9 *lakhs*, of which they were unwilling to abate anything. We certainly had no intention of paying this sum, and as the *jemadar* would not go away without having a positive reply from the Council, he said he would sleep in the fort, in order to be handy to carry out his commission, i.e. to pull down the bastions, he and his 50 men. At last the Council ordered every one to retire into the fort at 8 in the evening with all their most valuable property as we were likely to be besieged in the night of the 27th to 28th. The town was in the greatest confusion. Every one was frightened and carried his goods into the fort as quickly as he could run, all the posts were distributed, and every one for the time being turned soldier. As for me I was charmed with this adventure, because I had a musket, having always had a sneaking affection for the military life. I expected to kill at least a dozen of the Moors for myself in the first sortie that should be made, for I was quite resolved to join in it and not to stand idle on a bastion, where one often gets hurt without having the pleasure of hurting the enemy. Every one seemed quite determined to fight valiantly. The Moors would not have taken us so cheaply as they had the English, but peace was made on the 28th at 10.30 A.M. for [a sum of money]. I did not however think it would have ended in that way. Doubtless the Nawab had become sober again, since he withdrew the order to besiege us, on condition that we paid 3 *lakhs* and 35 or 36 thousand rupees, so they say, and every one received orders to go home. I leave you to judge if our ladies, who the day before were in the depths of desolation, received this news with pleasure. For the ladies don't like people to play at skittles [i.e. roll cannon-balls about] so close to them. However, my dear fellow, as for us, it was the mountain which brought forth a mouse. But the 3½ *lakhs*, you will say, that the Company has to pay, is that a mouse? Yes, my dear fellow, for I should like it to have to pay still more, to teach it not to leave this factory, which is

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

beyond contradiction the finest of its Settlements, denuded of soldiers and munitions of war, so that it is not possible for us to show our teeth, nor to protect ourselves from the insatiable cupidity for money which these people have shown of late, especially this very Nawab, who appears to me a kind of fellow disposed to vex the European nations as much as ever he can.

The 30th June we learned the loss of two English vessels,[1] full of silver and women, one at Makwa Tana, the other at Budge Budge, though we had been assured that they were all safe. It is said that the plainer of the women on board these two ships were allowed to ransom themselves; there was especially one lady who paid 25 rupees for each of the prettier women.[2] I do not know what their fate will be, and we persuade ourselves that this piece of information is not true. Besides so many jocular stories are made up about this business that one may be permitted to disbelieve many things which are reported, especially this, seeing that the Moors are very respectful to women.[3] As for the English they ought to recognize clearly, little as they are in the habit of thinking about it, that it is God who has made them feel the weight of His arm, and they ought to doubt no longer that the measure of their crimes is full.

15*th August*, 1756.[4]—We have just learned that the English wish to return and take Calcutta, and that they number 800, including the reinforcements which have come to them from the Coast to make this expedition. All those who took refuge here with the Nawab's permission, are going down to find their vessels, and, without doubt, to take part in this expedition. It is asserted that the Nawab, having got wind of this, is raising an army of 80,000 men to oppose any enterprises which they may undertake. He has sent 10,000 men to guard Calcutta. I don't know how all this will go off. Some say this formidable army is to oppose the *Grand Wazir* of the *Mogol King*, who is coming, they say, to make war on the Nawab and put another in his place. The Nawab

[1] The *Neptune* and the *Diligence*.

[2] Evidently a French version of the chivalrous action of Mirza Omar Beg, who restored some captured English ladies unhurt to their husbands.

[3] As seen in their behaviour to Mrs. Watts at Cossimbazar.

[4] A kind of postscript added to the preceding letter. (Note of the copyist.)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

says he is coming to help him to punish the English if they dare to seek a quarrel with him. However the country is already in a state of combustion or [soon] will be. I don't know whether the Europeans will suffer by it; there is everything for them to fear—I except the English. If the Nawab is victorious over the *Grand Wazir*, he might well drive them out of his country as he has done the English, under the idea which possesses his mind that our colonies are extremely rich. And, greedy of money as he is, there is nothing he will not undertake to get it. It is to be hoped that peace may be made in Europe and that the European nations may form a league to repress the insolence of this prince, who again appears indisposed to leave them in tranquillity and inclined to annoy them as much as he can. A concert must be established and if possible another Nawab put in his place. It is true that there would be many difficulties in this expedition—the different interests of the nations would never agree, the English and Dutch are too jealous of their commerce—and those people would betray their own fathers in such a matter, and it would be impossible to make them hear reason. However the actual facts must make them forget everything else. We are despised and mocked beyond endurance, and one needs the patience of the Saints to submit, however we must be patient in spite of ourselves, having no soldiers to shew them our teeth. Finally, my dear fellow, I will let you know the results of the revolutions in this country, and assuredly they ought to be both great and interesting. Adieu, be as well as I wish you to be, and believe me, whilst I live, your sincere and best friend.

26th August, 1756.[1]—There is nothing new since the 15th except a rumour that the English wish to come and re-take their town at once, not being able to sustain themselves any longer at the mouth of the river, all their people falling ill through the impossibility of setting foot on shore, owing to the country being so inundated that one cannot even erect a straw hut. You understand of course that they could find plenty of dry ground in the interior, but what could they do then with their ships? However I doubt this news.

[1] Second postscript from the same to the same. (Note of the copyist.)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

70. *Letter from J. Z. Holwell to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Hugli, 3 August,* 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—With this you have copy of my letter dispatched *per pattamar* from Muxadabad the 17th ultimo, on the reprizal of which I find a few errors and omissions occasioned by the wretched state I was then in, and which I now beg leave to rectify.

On the three advanced batteries being withdrawn Friday the 18th, possession was taken by our troops of the Church, and Messrs. Eyres, Cruttenden's, the Company's and Omy Chund's houses, but were all abandoned the next day (I think after the desertion of the President, Commandant &c.), but will be only positive as to the party in Mr. Cruttenden's house, commanded by Captain Lieutenant Smith, because when I was going round the ramparts after being appointed to the government of the fort, I discoursed with that party from the curtain next to Mr. Cruttenden's house.

In my letter of the 17th July, I omitted mentioning the enemy having made a lodgement on the Church on the morning of the 20th, but they did not finish their breastwork of bales upon it untill after 12. From this post which commanded every line and bastion of the fort, the enemy must have been dislodged by a counter lodgement upon the top of the Factory House had there been ammunition to have maintained the fort any longer.

I likewise omitted mentioning that one of the Moor's ships which were under our guns, was intended to be taken with the *Saint George* for the general retreat we had intended and planned for the night of the 20th, and which would have been carried into execution the 19th at night, had the *Saint George* come down to us with her boats.

In my mention of the western gate being betraid to the enemy during the parly, I did not advise that the guard there and a great part of the garrison, military and militia rushed out the moment the gate was opened and endeavoured to escape; many were killed, some escaped, and others received quarter. The gate was forced by a sergeant of the Train named Hedleburgh now in the service of the Nabob. During the parly, the southerly *futtock* or barrier was deserted by the sergeant and guard there, who fled,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and the enemy forcing that barrier, found nothing to oppose their enterance into the fort as soon as the western gate was forced. All the foregoing particulars in this paragraph came not to my knowledge untill my return from Muxadabad.

I remarked to your Honour &c. 5,000 of the enemy being killed by their own confession; but from more certain intelligence their loss is first and last seven thousand at least.

I over reckoned the number of prisoners put into the Black Hole and the number of the dead; the former being only 146 and the latter 123, many recovering after air was let in by opening the door in the morning; and many more I doubt not might have recovered had any means or care been taken of them. I charged the Nabob with designedly having ordered the unheard-of piece of cruelty of cramming us all into that small prison; but I have now reason to think I did him injustice. His orders I learn was only general, 'That we should be imprisoned that night, our number being too great to be at large.' And being left to the mercy and direction of his *jemidars* and *burkandosses*, their resentment for the number of their brethren slain took this method of revenge; and indeed they ceased not insulting us the whole night, though witnesses of horrors which bar all description.

I have said there was an order of Council the 18th in the evening for embarking the Company's treasure, books and the ladies. On recollection I think the Company's books was not part of the order. My mistake arose from a short conversation after Council between Mr. Manningham and myself on the propriety of carrying also the Company's books and essential papers off with him when he went to conduct the ladies. Whether the treasure or books were embarked I cannot say, the late President and Gentlemen below who have assumed the title and authority of 'Agents for the Company's Affairs' are the best judges. After the President's departure, I made inquiry after the Sub-Treasurer and keys of the Treasury, but neither one or the other was to be found. I intended on the first recess to have opened the Treasury to have been satisfied in this particular; but that recess never came.

'I have said the enemy was repulsed at Baag Buzar Redoubt by Ensign Paccard and 25 men, but forgot to mention his being reinforced by Lieutenant Blagg and 30 men; I also omitted that

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the *Saint George*, Captain Hague, and another small vessell commanded by Captain Campbell, was stationed up the river to cover that post, at the attack of which the enemy lost at least 800 men from the fire of the detachment on shore and from the ships, which obliged them to abandon their design of entering at that quarter, which they never attacked again.

I have more than once made mention of the want of ammunition as one principal cause of the loss of the Settlement, but beg leave to remark here, that had the quantity of our ammunition remaining been ever so great, it would have been morally impossible to have defended the fort another day, circumstanced as we were. For (not to mention the particulars of less moment, such as some of our Dutch soldiers being drunk, and a few worthless low fellows amongst the militia seditious and troublesome) our garrison by the numbers killed, wounded and deserted became so reduced that the duty and action was continual and without relief, and the strength of both officers and soldiers were in a manner quite exhausted. I should not have added any trouble to your Honour &c. on this subject, had I not been informed that a pompous account of the ammunition in Fort William when taken, has been transmitted to your Presidency and to my Honorable Masters, by some whom I am sorry to say must in this case have been glad to act on levelling principles, or they would have been a little more circumspect in transmitting the Report,[1] which I hear was taken from an old invalid sergeant of the Train named Myers, and a *matross* of the Train named Miller, which account as I am further informed was given by those people as the whole of the ammunition contained in the factory at the beginning of the siege, and indeed must be so from the nature of things, though I hear it is transmitted to your Honour &c. as an account of ammunition &c. remaining in the fort when surrendered. This I will suppose was by mistake, for I would not be thought to insinuate it could possibly be done with design. The whole quantity of the Company's powder in the magazine of the fort was at the beginning 740 *maunds* only, and some quantity belonging to the ships which as usual on their importing were deposited there, and a double quantity redelivered to

[1] See below, 'An account of ammunition in Fort William at the time of the Moors taking the place.'

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

them when sent on service to Tanner's Fort and to cover Baag Buzar Redoubt—four ships I think to Tanner's and two to Baag Buzar. The former cannonaded that post as I remember a day and night, and sent for a supply of powder which they received, and none was returned back from any of them. Add to this, the powder expended in the number of shells thrown, the continued cannonading from the advanced batteries to the northward and to the eastward as well as from the fort the 18th, and from the fort only on the 19th and 20th, and it will appear impossible there could be many hours' ammunition in the fort when surrendered. Add to this the Captain of the Train's report in Council the 18th which must surely carry greater weight and conviction with it than that of the people abovementioned, supposing their report to have been as transmitted; to corroborate which report of Captain L. Witherington, I beg leave to mention another circumstance that during the enemy's three attacks made to the northward in the morning of the 20th, Mr. Baillie and the Captain of the Train came to me and pressed my then throwing out a flag of truce, the latter telling me there was no powder left, but what was wet; I asked him whether there was not enough for a few hours. He replied that was the utmost; I then told him the enemy should be first convinced we could repulse them, and that a flag of truce would be afterwards thrown out with a much better prospect of success. The small quantity of powder at the beginning was the reason we could not think of blowing up the houses round us, and to have pulled them down would have been two months' work—*pucca* houses near as strong as the fort itself. Powder we made every day more or less untill the place was actually invested, but it was wet and useless, and a dependence on some shells filled with this powder had like to have been the loss of the north-west bastion the morning of the 20th, not one of them taking. Thus on the whole I may aver to your Honour &c. that not one article in the account of ammunition transmitted you, said to be in the fort at the time we surrendered, is true, save that of the wet powder of which I believe there was about 100 *maund*.

Accompanying this are the several lists promised in mine of the 17th ultimo. They are as correct as I at present can make them, and are deficient in nothing but in the number of those of the militia

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and others who quitted the fort the 18th and 19th, whose names I cannot obtain untill I join our scattered Colony below, which I intend doing in a day or two if I can attempt the thing with any degree of safety, having advice that Major Killpatrick is arrived on the *Delawar* with a reinforcement of 250 men.

I am &c. &c. J. *Z.* HOLWELL.

P.S. Since closing the above I have been favoured with letters from some of the gentlemen, subalterns of the militia, extenuating their quitting the fort, concerning whom I am to request your Honour &c. will suspend your judgement until they have an opportunity of speaking for themselves, more particularly Messrs. Mapletoft, Wedderburn, Douglas and Sumner, who were with leave on board the ships to secure some papers and just to see their families. The three former asserting the late President assured them the retreat was general and that everybody was quitting the fort, and the latter proving he was detained on board the *Dadaly* by the express order of his officer Colonel Manningham and all deprived of any possibility of returning by the falling down of the ships. In saying Ensign Walcot was the only military officer of the garrison alive I committed another mistake, Ensign Carstairs wounded in the gallant defence of the Jail is living, though appears to have lost the use of his arm.

J. *Z.* HOLWELL.

A List of those who quitted Fort William the 18th and 19th June, 1756.

Governor Drake, 19th June
Colonel Manningham, 18th do.
Lieutenant-Colonel Frankland, 18th do.
Mr. Mackett, 2nd Captain Militia, 19th do.
Captain Minchin, Commandant, 19th do.
Captain Grant, Adjutant-General, 19th do.
Rev. Mr. Mapletoft, Captain Lieutenant Militia, 19th do.
Charles O'Hara, Ensign and Lieutenant Train, 19th do.
Henry Wedderburn, Lieutenant Militia, 19th do.
Charles Douglas, Ensign Militia, 19th do.
Thomas Holmes, Lieutenant Militia, 18th do.
William Sumner, Lieutenant Militia, 18th do.
Robert Halsey Baldrick, Ensign Militia, 19th do.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Volunteers.

Mr. William Ellis, 19th June
Mr. William Billers
Mr. William Rider, 19th June
Mr. Ascanius Senior
Mr. Willam Orr
Mr. Francis Vasmor, 19th June
Mr. Robert Leicester
Mr. Stephen Page
Mr. William Tooke
Mr. Francis Charlton
Mr. — Champion, 19th June
Captain Lodwick Lord, wounded
Captain — Campbell, 19th June

Militia.

Mr. Edward Holden Cruttenden
Mr. Anselm Beaumont
Captain David Rannie
Mr. William Nixon
Mr. John Putham
Captain Nicholson and Officers
Captain Austin and Officers
Mr. William Lindsay
Captain Whatmoug and Officers
Captain Young and do.
Mr. Margass
Mr. Pyfinch
Captain Walmsley
William Burton
Monsieur Albert
Monsieur Carvallo
Mr. John Wood
Captain Laing
Henry Sumus (Summers)
Captain Hugh Baillie
Edward Ridge
William Elves
Daniel Whaley
William Ling
John Strousenberg
John Helmstead &c.

Doctors.

William Fullerton

A List of those smother'd in the Black Hole the 20th June, 1756, at Night, exclusive of the English, Dutch, and Portugueze Soldiers, whose names I am unacquainted with.

Messrs. Edward Eyre, William Baillie } Esqrs.
Rev. Mr. Jervas Bellamy
Messrs. Jenks
Revely
Law
Valicourt
Jebb
Coales
Toriano
Messrs. E. Page
Grubb
Street
Harod
Johnston
Ballard
N. Drake
Carse
Knapton
Goslin

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Messrs. Bing
Dod
Dalrymple
Captains Clayton, Commandant
Buchanan
Witherington
Lieutenants Bishop
Hays
Blagg
Simpson
Bellamy, Junior
Ensigns Paccard
Scott
Hastings
Charles Wedderburn

Serjeant Major Dumbleton, Ensign Militia
Mr. Atkinson
Abraham
Cartwright
Bleau
} Serjeant Militia
Cary
Stephenson
Guy
Porter
Captain Hunt
Parker
Stephen Page
Captain Osborne
Purnel
Mr. Calker
Bendal, &c.

A List of those who came alive out of the Black Hole the 21st in the Morning.

Messrs. Holwell
Court
Cooke
Walcott
Lushington
Burdett

Messrs. Moran
John Meadows
Captain Mills
Dickson
and
8 or 9 Soldiers and Gunners

A List of Officers killed and wounded after the desertion of the Governor, &c.

Captain-Lieutenant Smith, killed.
Captain Pickering, one of the Captains of the Points at the Great Guns—killed.
Lieutenant Simson—wounded.
Lieutenant Talbot—wounded and died of his wounds the 21st in the morning.

Ensign Paccard—wounded.
Scott—ditto.
Coales of the Militia—wounded.
Carstairs—wounded at the Jail the 18th; As also Monsieur La Beaume who commanded at that Post.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

71. *Letter from Major Kilpatrick to Council, Fort Saint George, dated on board the 'Delawar,' Fulta, 5 August, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—I take this (the first opportunity I could possibly meet with) to have the honour of acquainting you that I arrived on the river on the 28th ultimo, with the troops under my command, mostly in good health and spirits. Of these I here now inclose you a return together with a state of the military at Bengal and of the ordinance stores.

I need not I believe inform you, Gentlemen, of the melancholly news I met with upon my first arrival here, which you will no doubt have heard and before this can reach you, and with all its cruel circumstances from Mr. Manningham.

I left the *Delawar*, which is now safely come up, on the 30th ultimo at the request of the Governour and Council, and found them the same day on board of their ships in a situation not easy to be described. You may more easily imagine the condition of those poor gentlemen, driven out from their habitations, driven out from all they have in the world, and what is worst, having lost all or almost all that had been committed to their charge; where many people around them who have also lost their alls, are discontented and even troublesome, pretending to find fault and give their opinions without showing that respect which they ought. I hope however when we all meet (for there are still three of the Council up at the French Factory) that we shall be then able to re-establish harmony, and take such resolutions as will be most for the benefit of the Honourable Company, and advantage of the whole.

When I mention the Council, I ought to inform you that I have the honour to act here as one of the members, in a manner at the desire of the gentlemen themselves, for they told me that it was the Company's orders, that whenever a Major happened to be with them, he should always take the third place at the Board, which I accordingly did; though I let them know at the same time that I never had had that honour with you, and the reasons which had been given for it.

We have been pretty well supplied with provisions since I have come here, which has a good deal taken off from the apprehensions

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of the country people, who, I believe, are otherwise disposed to supply us, as we take care that they are well used.

The place and situation we are in renders it extremely unhealthfull, and I am sorry to hear that it will be but more so as the season advances. Yet I don't believe we well can move from this, till we have had advices from you; for I am informed that both sides of the river downwards, and a good way up, are so entirely swamps and *paddy* fields that it would be impossible to keep the people on shore: and to attack the enemy at present, though we were even sure to make ourselves masters of Calcutta, would be to no manner of purpose in the world, if you are not in a condition to send us large supplies of, in short, everything.

I have found neither men, guns, nor ammunition here. The enclosed will shew you our numbers. The four field-pieces you sent with me is all our Train; and the ammunition you sent with those is all we have got of the kind. Captain Winter[1] spared us some powder and lead with which I have made up about fifty rounds a man, which is all we have to trust to in case of an attack, of which we have had some uncertain reports, particularly from a great armament of boats which we have heard they are preparing against us up the river.

Affairs are in such a situation here that I have entirely given over all thoughts for the present of returning home as I intended. I have always had that attachment to the Honourable Company, whatever disappointments I may have met with, as never to have let any private concerns sway with me where they were at all interested: nor would I ever leave their service, unless I was extremely ill used indeed, at a time when my staying might be so necessary as it very probably will be here. I was sorry, it is true, to find this season that they had not thought proper to put me on the footing that the station you had given me and my services I imagined might have deserved. But as I have always had so much your good inclinations, gentlemen, I hope you will be able to represent things to them in such a manner by the first shipping, that they will think it right to consider me in a way that will be both agreeable to me and for my honour.

I have &c., &c., JAMES KILLPATRICK.

[1] Of the *Delaware*.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

72. *Captain Mills' account of what happened to him after he came out of the Black Hole, until he joined the fleet on the* 10*th of August,* 1756, *at Fulta.*

Captain Mills as soon as he came out of the Black Hole began to break out all over in boils, the pain of which together with his weakness disenabled him from walking more than 30 yards at a time without resting. He however with Captain Dixon, Mr. Moran and —— got down to Surman's gardens in the evening from whence the ships had sailed a little before. Here one of the Nabob's officers advised them with much humanity to desist from proceeding any farther down the river because guards were placed all along, by whom they might probably be insulted or ill used. On this they returned to Gobindpore, where they remained three days in a hut where they were supplied in the night by the natives who had lived under the English protection with victuals; but in the day were often insulted by the Nabob's troops. The Nabob then published an order signifying that the English might return to their houses and, the wounded man being dead, Captain Mills with his two other companions returned to the town, where they were joined by Mr. John Knox of Patna and Mr. Gray junior, and the whole company went and lived in the house of Mr. Knox, where they were supplied with some provisions by Omichund and got at more that remained in the houses of other European inhabitants. The Nabob went away about the 25th but this date is not certain; and on the last of June a drunken European sergeant killed a Moorman on which Monickchund, who was left Governor of Calcutta, issued an order that all the Europeans should quit the Settlement. On this Captain Mills with his companions went up to the French Gardens where resided Mr. Young, the Prussian Supercargo, by whom they were received and entertained with much humanity and politeness; from whence they went the next morning to the French at Chandernagore by whom they were likewise received with great hospitality. Here they remained until the 8th or 9th of August when they hired a boat and joined the fleet at Fulta on the 10th.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

73. *Extract from a letter from Council, Vizagapatam, to Council, Fort Saint George, dated* 13 *August*, 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—We dispatch this express to your Honour &c. to advise you of the arrival of our Honourable Masters' sloop *Syren* yesterday evening at Bimlepatam from Bengal, and it is with the deepest concern we are to acquaint your Honour &c. that she brings us an account of the capture of Calcutta by the Nabob the 20th of June last, for the melancholy particulars of which we refer you to the accompanying letters from the President and Council there and Mr. Manningham, who is come on the above sloop in order to proceed to Madras overland which he intends doing with the utmost expedition.

The gentlemen at Bengal having applied to us to supply the *Syren* with stores and other necessarys we shall comply therewith and immediately dispatch her back to them, agreeable to their orders, but as they inform us they shall soon want our further assistance we therefore desire your Honour &c.'s directions thereon.

* * * * *

We have, &c., &c., J. L. SMITH, MARMADUKE BEST.

74. *Fort Saint George Public Consultations,* 17 *August*, 1756. *Present: George Pigot, Esqr. (Governor and President), Stringer Lawrence, Henry Powney, Robert Orme, William Perceval, John Smith, Charles Bourchier.*

The Book of Standing Orders lying on the table.

The President acquaints the Board that he had summoned them to communicate the contents of a letter received last night from Messrs. Watts and Collet, advising of the loss of Fort William which letter is now read as follows:—

Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet, dated Chandernagore, 2nd July, 1756 (*See No.* 38).

The President also lays before the Board the translation of the copys of two letters one from the Nabob of Bengal to him, the original whereof is committed to the care of Mr. Watts, the other from the Nabob of Bengal to the French Director at Chandernagore, which are as follow:—

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

A copy of a perwana *or letter from Nabob Mansoorel Muloch Serajah*[1] *Dowlah Bahadar Hayabet Jung to the* Gomasta *of the English of the* Koatey *or Trading House at Madras.*

Directore Pigot, of high and great rank, and greatest of the merchants, May you be possessor of the *Patcha's*[2] favour.

It was not my intention to remove the mercantile business of the Company belonging to you from out of the *subah* of Bengal, but Roger Drake your *gomasta* was a very wicked and unruly man and began to give protection to persons who had accounts with the *Patcha* in his *koatey*.[3] Notwithstanding all my admonitions, yet he did not desist from his shameless actions. Why should these people who come to transact the mercantile affairs of the Company be doers of such actions? however that shameless man has met with the desert of his actions and was expelled this *subah*. I gave leave to Mr. Watts who is a helpless, poor, and innocent man to go to you. As I esteemed you to be a substantial person belonging to the Company, I have wrote these circumstances of his shameless and wicked proceedings. Dated the 1st of Moon Shaval in the 3rd year of the *Mogull's* reign which is the 30th of June 1756.

A copy of a perwana *or letter from Nabob Mansoorel Muloch Serajah Dowlah Bahadar.*

Great merchant and man of friendship, Monsieur Renaud, Directore-General of the French Company, Be happy.

I have sent Mr. Watts an Englishman and *gomasta* at Cossimbuzar to you with a letter to Mr. Pigot commanding in the *koatey* (or trading house) at Madras, a copy of which is enclosed, you must therefore send for the said Mr. Watts's family who were committed to the charge of the *gomasta* at Sydabad[4] and send him away with his family to Mr. Pigot at Madras. See them arrived and send for Mr. Watts's receipt with an answer to my letter and forward them to me who am welwisher of the people. Dated the

[1] *Mansur-ul-mulk*, ruler of the country, and *Haibat Jang*, terrible in battle
[2] i.e., *Badshah*, or Emperor.
[3] Factory
[4] The French Factory at Cossimbazar.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

29th of Moon Ramadan in the 3rd year of the *Mogul's* reign which is the 28th of June 1756.

The great importance of the Settlement of Calcutta to the Company appears in such a light to the Board that they are thoroughly satisfied the utmost efforts should be made to recover it. It is agreed therefore to consult Mr. Watson on this occasion as it is the opinion of the Board the squadron, or part, may render great services at this time, and in consequence of this resolution it is agreed to suspend the embarkation of the troops as settled in consultation the 14th instant untill further measures have been concerted with Mr. Watson.

GEORGE PIGOT, STRINGER LAWRENCE, HENRY POWNEY, ROBERT ORME, WILLM. PERCEVAL, JOHN SMITH, C. BOURCHIER.

75. *Letter from the Council at Fulta to the Council, Fort Saint George, dated* 18 *August*, 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—We have received your several letters of the 8th, 14th and 20th July by the *Mermaid* sloop, *Norwood* and *Delawar*, with the consignment of treasure and redwood your Honor &c. have sent us on those vessels.

Major Killpatrick and the detachment under his command joined us on the 31st ultimo. Had his reinforcement arrived before the loss of our Settlement, it might have been of great use in defence of the place; but in our present situation we cannot pretend to undertake any thing with so small a force and without cannon, for which reason we flatter ourselves your Honor &c. will comply with the request we have made by Mr. Manningham (duplicate of which address we now enclose you) for assisting us with a sufficient force both military and marine in order to re-establish the Honourable Company's Settlements in these provinces, the importance whereof to our Employers we leave your Honor &c. to judge.

Major Killpatrick has in a separate letter transmitted you a return of the military and stores now in the fleet; from which your Honor &c. will judge what stores and ammunition will be wanting, and supply us accordingly.

Should your Honor &c. not have it in your power to furnish

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

us with a proper and necessary force to re-establish ourselves on a secure footing, we request you will send us the earliest notice of what we are to expect, as the season is far advanced, and our ships will not be able to proceed to the Coast after the 20th or 25th September.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, WILLIAM WATTS, JAMES KILPATRICK, PAUL RICHARD PEARKES, J. Z. HOLWELL, WILLIAM MACKETT, P. AMYATT, THOMAS BODDAM.

76. *Letter from Secret Committee at Fulta to Council, Fort Saint George, dated* 19 *August*, 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—That such advices and material transactions which are requisite to be performed with diligence and secresy might be so practised, a Secret Committee is composed consisting of the subscribers hereto, who have thought proper to keep from the knowledge of the publick the contents of your Honor &c.'s letter dated the 4th instant, per *Sea Horse* sloop enclosing invoice of one hundred barrells of powder and twenty barrells of musquet ammunition, with the agreeable advice of Admiral Watson having been so good as to spare the *Bridgewater* man-of-war, in order that your Honor &c. might have conveyance to embark us a second detachment with a further supply of military stores. From the latest advices we learn that the Nabob his forces quartered now at Calcutta, Tannah's Fort, and Boug Bouggee consist of about seven thousand, and that further numbers are ordered to proceed towards Calcutta. We esteem it necessary to acquaint your Honor &c. that many private letters advises that the *Bridgewater* and forces are preparing to proceed to our relief; therefore to prevent too soon a publication of your resolutions touching what support you are able to afford us, we are to desire express orders may be given to every commander of any vessels proceeding down here, not to deliver any letters whatsoever but to the gentleman whom he may find acts at the head of affairs.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, WILLIAM WATTS, JAMES KILLPATRICK, J. Z. HOLWELL.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

77. Extracts from a letter from the Council, Fort Saint George, to Admiral Watson (Consultations 20 August, 1756).[1]

What we should have done before your departure we now anticipate in laying before you our full sense of the late calamity at Bengal, the fatal consequences it may, we fear will, produce, and the resolutions to be taken by us will be nothing more than the result of these reflections.

It is necessary to mount a little higher than the present times, that you may be entirely master of this subject.

An embassy deputed by the East India Company to Delhi about 40 years ago, obtained from the great *Mogul* at more than the expence of £100,000, the rights and priviledges which their Settlements have hitherto enjoyed in Indostan. They obtained for the Presidency of Bengal infinitely more than the violence of the *subah* of their province permitted them to possess themselves of. Regardless of the King's mandate, he prevented them from possessing nine-tenths of the lands which had been granted.

What remained was sufficient for the establishment of a flourishing colony. Calcutta by its investments has been hitherto, notwithstanding all the interruptions of the Nabobs, the most beneficial part of the Company's estate.

The space of three years together has seldom passed without demands of money made by the Nabob upon the English under groundless pretences. The state of the Company's investment laying in the reach of the Government, and out of the reach of the Presidency, has generally induced the English to submit to pay some consideration in money in order to prevent greater detriment to the Company's affairs. The late Nabob, grandfather to the present, several times obliged the English to these concessions.

Some such pretences, groundless we believe, the present Nabob made use of in order to sanctify the violence of his late proceeding. He tells our President, Mr. Pigot, in a letter, that it was not his intention to extirpate the English from his *subah*. Intentions are best seen by facts. The wealth of Calcutta was his aim and, to

[1] This letter is copied in Orme's MSS., vol. iii., pp. 785, 786, where it is stated to have been composed by Robert Orme himself.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the vast misfortune of our nation, he has possessed himself of it. We are advised just now by private letters that he has plundered all the effects of the colony, to whomsoever belonging.

To this immense loss and detriment has been added circumstances which will weigh equally in the opinion of the nation, cruelties and barbarities inflicted on the subjects of Great Britain, which have ended in the death of many gentlemen of consideration there, the survivors drove to their vessels, and interdicted by his ban from receiving any kind of succours from his subjects.

We refer to you, sir, how much the honour of the English nation is concerned in these most violent breaches of faith, and of humanity. We submit to you, sir, to determine whether exemplary reparation is not necessary.

On these sentiments we made our first application to you. The taking satisfaction in the most exemplary manner will in our opinion be the quickest means of re-establishing the English in the province of Bengal and even on better terms than they have hitherto obtained.

The appearance of a flag[1] will add weight to the terms that may at last be made, and the greater our force in Bengal the more immediately will the reparation of our injuries be in our own hands.

On the contrary should nothing of this kind succeed, we tremble for the consequences which will befall the Company.

78. *Extract from Fulta Consultations, 20th August, 1756.*

Captain Alexander Grant now sends in a letter to the Board in relation to his behaviour at Calcutta during the siege.

Ordered it to be entered after this day's Consultation.

Upon taking the same into consideration and being well satisfied with his behaviour during the siege,

Ordered the Secretary to inform him that we have no objection to his acting in his rank as a Captain of the military from which station they never suspended him, but only desired Lieutenants Keene and Muir to keep the charge of their respective military to prevent any confusion. Mr. Pearkes objects:—

[1] His Majesty's flag.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

First. He thinks that in a great measure both he and Captain Minchin have suspended themselves, for when the Ballasore and Jugdea parties came they never required the returns of those officers nor had they them delivered, which was a tacit acknowledgment of their not esteeming themselves as acting as Captains, or they would have obliged the officers of that detachment to have regularly delivered them their Returns.

Secondly. He acknowledges and esteems it but justice to testify to the good behaviour of Captain Grant during the time of his being an officer on the Bengal Establishment and particularly during the siege while he stayed; which gave every one the greatest opinion of him and he was esteemed the best officer in the service, and in consequence thereof entrusted with the whole direction of the military as far as he could be, by the name of Adjutant General, and Captain Minchin's going occasioned not the least concern to anyone, but that it was with great difficulty we could persuade ourselves that Captain Grant had left us, and though he imagines there might have been some sudden infatuation that occasioned his leaving us, yet he cannot upon any account give his vote to a gentleman on whose conduct and bravery we so much relied, acting as a Captain again, after having deceived us, till by some future conduct as a volunteer, he reinstates himself in our good opinion, or is cleared by a proper court martial.

79. *Mr. Holwell's Minute and Dissent in Council, the 20th of August, 1756, at Fulta referred to in the preceding*[1] *letter of the 25th October.*

Mr. Holwell observes that we have a bill before us, amounting to Arcot rupees 64662 annaes 8, on account of expences and damages of ship *Dodaly*, commencing 9th of June, 1756. He further remarks, that the charge of this ship is founded on her being taken up for the defence of the Company's fort, effects, and Settlement; but that she abandoned such defence, by falling down from the fort and Settlement, without orders, the 18th of June at night; to which he cannot help attributing all the misfortunes

[1] Given under its own date.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

which ensued. He therefore dissents to any payment or consideration being made by the Honourable Company, on account of her expence, loss or damage charged in the said bill, except for provisions, etc. for the use of the Company's servants on board.

80. *Mr. Holwell's Minute on the Fulta Consultations, at his first joining the Agency at that place. Fulta, 13th August,* 1756.

Captain Dugald Campbell's commission being tendered to Mr. Holwell to sign, he refused the same, and requested the gentlemen would please to excuse his not signing that, or any other paper whatsoever, in the present state of the government affairs, for the following reasons:

1st. He conceives that when the Honourable the late President, and Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, and Macket abandoned the fort and garrison of Fort William the 18th and 19th of June last, and quitted the defence of these and the Honourable Company's effects, they did, by such act, to all intents and purposes, divest themselves of all right or pretensions to the future government of the Company's affairs, or the colony.

2dly. That on the said abdication of the Honourable the late President, and Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, and Macket, the remaining gentlemen of Council (the only government then subsisting) did with the unanimous approval of the garrison, officers, etc. elect and appoint, in Council, him, Mr. Holwell, Governor of the fort and garrison, and administrator of the Company's affairs during the troubles; his right to which latter appointment, he does not think the gentlemen at present constituting the Agency have any just power to divest him of, or with-hold from him; howsoever, and under whatsoever other head the remainder of the colony, who are not servants to the Company, may think proper to dispose of themselves.

3dly. That the late President, and Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, and Macket being (justly as he conceives) the 19th of June in Council, suspended the Honourable Company's service, he thinks this act alone sufficient to divest them of all future rule in any matters relative to the Company's affairs, until their pleasure from Europe be known. The more especially as the said suspension met with (as he is informed) the approval and assent of

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Messrs. Watts and Collet, in their disavowing any subjection to be due to the orders of the Agency, issued to them from Fulta; a confirmation of the suspension by six members, the majority of the whole Council.

4thly. That in consequence of the before-recited transaction, he thinks Mr. Peter Amyat (the senior servant of the Company then present) was on his joining the fleet with his factory of Luckypore, the only person invested with any just title or authority to conduct the affairs and concerns of the Company, and to associate with him as many of their servants next in standing to him, as he thought necessary, until the arrival of the gentlemen of the Board of Calcutta, who lay under no censure or suspicion from the service.

5thly and lastly. That, to avoid the further embroiling his Honourable Employers' affairs, by raising feuds and differences, which might ensue by his openly and publicly asserting and claiming his undoubted title to the administration of them, he submits such his just right to the breasts of the Agency themselves, and will quietly abide by their determination; but cannot, by any act of his own, either wave such his just title or admit any just authority to be invested in the Agency; a character assumed, in his absence, without right; and permitted by the indulgence only of the remainder of the colony, and now continued, as he conceives, to the prejudice of the rights of himself and others. He therefore thinks himself justified in refusing to sign any paper or Consultation whatsoever, which he cannot do consistently with himself, as he cannot consider himself in any other view, or point of light, than in that in which the last subsisting government of Fort William placed him; but shall, notwithstanding, be always ready to devote his person and counsel to the interest of his Honourable Masters' affairs, wherever they call him. To that purpose shall duly attend the Councils of the Agency, agreeably to the request of the Honourable the late President made to him in writing the 12th instant.[1]

[1] 'N.B.—Some few days subsequent to the above transaction, the Agency thought it highly essential to elect and constitute a Secret Committee, and urging to Mr. Holwell that the good of the service required his being one of that body, but that such election was impossible unless he receded from his resolution of not signing; he therefore was prevailed upon to recede from that part of his Minute only on the above consideration, and to evince that no private motive or resentment could sway

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

81. *Copy of the President's letter above mentioned, to Mr. Holwell, dated Thursday, 12 August, 1756.*

SIR,—Had not our boat been so extremely leaky, I proposed doing myself the pleasure of waiting on you this morning.

We have concluded to meet on shore, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. It will be an infinite satisfaction that you will be pleased to join us, particularly to me who esteem your advice, and who am, very truly,

Your, &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR.

82. *Extract from Fort Saint George Select Committee Consultations, 21 August, 1756.*

The President acquaints the Committee that intelligence was received on the 16th instant of the taking of Calcutta by the Moors on the 20th June.

83. *Extract from Secret Committee Proceedings at Fulta, 22 August, 1756.*

'Major Killpatrick on the 15th instant wrote a complimentary letter[1] to the Nabob Suraged Dowla complaining a little of the hard usage of the English Honourable Company, assuring him of his good intentions notwithstanding what had happened and begging in the meantime, till things were cleared up, that he would treat him at least as a friend and give orders that our people may be supplied with provisions in a full and friendly manner.'

84. *Translation of a letter from M. Furnier to M. le Marquis Dupleix at Paris, dated Chandernagore, 24 August, 1756.*[2]

SIR,—I had the honour to write to you by the ships of the last expedition ;[3] but as they have been stopped at the Isle of France,[4] I think my letters will not reach you long before this.

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him to any determination detrimental to his Employers' service. The Committee was accordingly appointed, consisting of the President, Major Kilpatrick, and Mr. Holwell' (*Indian Tracts*).

[1] Sent through Mr. Bisdom, the Dutch Governor, to Mr. Warren Hastings at Cossimbazar for delivery. From the proceedings of September 30 it would appear that Hastings thought its delivery unnecessary.

[2] Bibliothèque Nationale MSS., Paris.

[3] That is, 'the last yearly fleet,' despatched early in the year.

[4] Mauritius.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Without doubt you will be surprised, sir, when you learn, from the letters of the Company's Council here, the loss suffered by the English last June of all their establishments in Bengal. You will not be less [surprised to hear] of the contribution which the Nawab has forced us [to pay] and which is without example since our establishment [at Chandernagore]. However it was not till we had tried everything that prudence could dictate in such critical and delicate circumstances that we submitted; and this resolution appeared to us the wisest we could come to in the situation in which we found ourselves, so as not to compromise [the safety of] our colony. This makes us hope that the Company, when it has weighed our reasons, will not disapprove of our action.

The Dutch have not been treated better than ourselves. It has indeed cost them much more, and all the merchants, without exception, in anything like easy circumstances, have experienced the cupidity of Siraj-uddaula. This young man, who knows no laws except those of his own wishes, spares no one, not even the officers of his grandfather Aliverdi Khan, whom he despoils of all their property.

This success of the Moors, though they owe it only to the imprudence and the inconsiderate conduct of Mr. Drake, Governor of Calcutta has rendered them insupportably arrogant and insolent, so that if this government continues on its present footing we shall have much to suffer, and commerce will become extremely difficult.

The English are at Fulta, to the number of 800 men, including a reinforcement which arrived lately from Madras; however they make no movement, and it is not known what resolution they will come to; but whatever they do, it will not be possible for them to recoup their Company for a loss so considerable as that which they have just suffered, nor to re-establish the fortunes of a number of private persons, white and black, whom this unfortunate event has reduced to beggary.

We are in the utmost impatience to learn what will be the result of the great preparations for war which are being made in Europe. The situation in which we are here makes us desire that these preparations, far from serving for war, may procure us a solid and durable peace.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Pray accept, sir, the respects of my wife and family. We have the honour to present them equally to Madame the Marquise.

I have, &c., &c., M. FOURNIER.

85. *Extract from a letter from Admiral Watson to Council, Fort Saint George, dated 25 August, 1756.*

'And having further considered this expedition, I am apt to think, if it is delayed, 'till the last week in next month, there will be a much greater probability of success attending it than if the ships were to proceed immediately, as they will then escape the rainy season, which is allowed by every body to be the most unhealthy part of the year, and in all appearance, if the ships were to go now, one-third of the men would fall sick before there would be an opportunity of doing any service.'

86. *Translation of extracts from a letter from M. Pierre Renault to M. le Marquis Dupleix, dated Chandernagore, 26 August, 1756.*[1]

SIR,—I heard with the greatest satisfaction of your happy arrival in France. The great interest which I take in all that concerns you makes me eager to enquire after the most trifling circumstances. That which has pleased me most, is the good health which you enjoy: I pray to God to preserve it: may you enjoy it as long and with as much satisfaction as I desire you to.

* * * * *

I will now, sir, tell you of a very extraordinary event which happened last June. This is the expulsion of the English from Bengal, and to make you understand what caused it I will begin from the beginning.

The Nawab Aliverdikhan having become infirm and at last fallen into a kind of lethargy, the chiefs of the province, to avoid the misfortunes with which they thought themselves threatened by the government of his grandson Siraj-uddaula who was to succeed him, a young man of 25, of haughty character, violent, and of an unheard of cruelty, all conspired against him. His aunt, widow of Nawajis Muhammad Khan, known under the name of the *Begum* of Moti Jhil, who had at her disposition a party in the

[1] Bibliothèque Nationale MSS., Paris.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

State with a considerable body of troops, having put herself at their head, it seemed that nothing could resist this faction. The English under this impression, thinking the ruin of Siraj-uddaula, by whom they were not loved, inevitable, and possibly supposing this period of dissension favourable to their aggrandisement, entered into a conspiracy with the *Begum* and took into their charge a portion of the wealth belonging to this faction, but however great the precautions they took to hide their intrigues, if possibly Siraj-uddaula had not a complete acquaintance with them, he at any rate knew enough to conceive a lively resentment. In the meantime Aliverdikhan died, and his officers having immediately recognised Siraj-uddaula, this prince did not delay to fall with his grandfather's troops on the faction of the *Begum*, and this woman, who by the considerable preparations she had made seemed inclined to vigorously dispute the government with him, surrendered at the first attack, and by this weakness she occasioned the ruin of her faction. Certain persons, declared enemies of the Nawab, retired to Calcutta to avoid his fury. The Nawab demanded their surrender, but the English who, in receiving them, had sold their protection at a high price,[1] found themselves obliged to stand by what they had done, and by this thoughtless conduct, not only refused to give them up but even wrote to the Nawab with hauteur and in ill-considered terms. The Nawab enraged at this behaviour, advanced his army against the English factory at Cassimbazar which was taken on the 3rd June without a blow being struck. All the English, men and women, except the wife of the chief, who was sent to the French factory, were taken to the *kacharis*[2] in Muxadavad, where they suffered many indignities. All the goods found in the factory were also carried away to the same place.

The Nawab encouraged by this prosperous beginning, immediately set out for Calcutta, where he arrived on the 17th with an army of 50 to 60 thousand men, 250 cannon and 500 elephants. He attacked it on the 18th and took it on the 20th of the same month. The Governor of that place, forewarned of the disposition

[1] This accusation was afterwards made the subject of inquiry by the Court (see Letter from Court, March 23, 1759, paragraph 132, and Holwell's Letter to Clive, November 5, 1759).

[2] Law Courts or Offices.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of the Nawab towards him at the same time as he heard of his march, had, they say, made all preparations for a vigorous resistance, and every one thought the Nawab would fail in his enterprise. However on the second day of the attack, although he had from 7 to 8 hundred men, of whom 600 were Europeans, the Governor, after having embarked the greater part of the wealth which the inhabitants had deposited in the fortress as in a place of safety, himself embarked with a portion of the garrison and all the ladies of any importance. The commandant of the troops followed him the same day with certain of the councillors and chief inhabitants of the colony. In short this unhappy town which had been expected to make the strongest resistance, whilst waiting for the succours which the English had demanded from the [Madras] Coast, was taken the third day of the attack and exposed to the most terrible disorders. The English lost here about 200 men.

Of the Christians, some of the women were carried off by the Moors, many others whilst trying to save themselves were put to the sword or were drowned in the Ganges, and those who escaped came to this colony to the number of 3,000, in the most deplorable condition. The Armenians and Gentiles were equally ruined. The Governor had taken so little precautions for his retreat that on the twelve ships which they used for it there were none of the articles most necessary for life, not even rigging or ballast. Three of the ships were wrecked and fell into the hands of the Moors, who found a great booty in them, the others got down to Fulta, where up to now the English have suffered the greatest misery.

The factory which they had at Dacca has also been surrendered without any fighting. The Moors found there more than fourteen hundred thousand rupees in merchandise and silver. The Company's servants at Jugdea and Luckipur escaped and rejoined their countrymen at Fulta, but left a large quantity of merchandise in their factories.

It will doubtless appear surprising to you that a nation, established and accredited in this province for so long and making in it a considerable trade, should have been expelled from all the factories it possessed almost as soon as the intention to do so occurred to the Nawab. Although the English had given this Prince reason for being irritated against them, it appears certain that if

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

they had had to do with a man more capable of reflection and less headstrong, they would not have suffered a fate so rigorous, but this Nawab, as ferocious in his way of thinking as he is cruel in action, took hold of the first pretext to satisfy at the same time his hatred for the English and his cupidity, without any regard to the difference which this conduct might make in his revenues. His mistrust as to the success of his enterprise against Calcutta, which passed amongst the people of the country for a very strong place, obliged him to demand assistance from us, though he threatened at the same time to treat us like the English if we did not give it. However rigorous this necessity might appear we did not think we could submit to it. I excused myself by all the most plausible reasons, but with this Prince, who recognises no will but his own and who wishes everything to submit to it, our refusal evidently exposed us to his most lively resentment, and we had every reason to think he would come and attack us. A rumour to this effect was spread abroad. The alarm in this colony caused by the capture of Calcutta was extreme when we saw his army defiling in our direction, crossing the Ganges by a bridge of boats, and camping almost at our barriers. His army elated with its success over the English only waited for orders to fall upon us. The Prince, with the pride of a conqueror asked us for a contribution of 20 *lakhs*, threatening not merely to throw down our fortifications and our flag but even to abolish our *dastak* and all our privileges. My indignation at such an unjust demand was extreme. I would have liked to oppose such tyrannical pretentions by force, but what could we have done in the situation we were placed in with a garrison of about 80 men, the greater part foreigners, who from what we could judge of their feelings might have failed us at the first attack? Besides we had few munitions [of war] and were in a fort, the defences of which were only half completed, and which is commanded by many houses or has them too close to it. Though we flattered ourselves we could have held out 10 or 12 days, which would have been very difficult, having no hope of speedy succours, we should without doubt have found ourselves in the most cruel extremities, and forced to save ourselves in the ships, by a retreat which, distant as we were from

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the bank of the Ganges, would have caused us, with all our families, to run very great risks. What loss would not the Company have suffered in the abandonment of this establishment which would have drawn along with it that of the smaller factories! What would it not have cost to re-establish ourselves! How much time would it have taken, and what would have been the conditions! All these considerations, carefully considered, made us choose the path of negotiation as the most sensible and the most suited to the Company's interests. We hope that if the Company will carefully examine into the reasons which have determined our conduct, it will not merely approve, but even be grateful to us for having saved it, as we have done, from the danger to which this Establishment was exposed. In spite of all my efforts to save us from the unjust demand of the Nawab, we have had to pay to him and his officers 340 thousand rupees, a sum certainly very considerable, but which cannot be compared with the dreadful results which a foolish resistance would have brought upon the Company and ourselves. The Dutch who found themselves in the same position as we did, though they had 500 able-bodied men in their factory, all of whom were Europeans, preferred to submit and pay 450 thousand rupees rather than drive matters to extremities.

The violent action which the Nawab has taken against the English, and the contributions which he has exacted from the [foreign] nations, ought to open people's eyes to the character of this Prince. Filled with pride by the success which he has had over the English, and ruled by an insatiable cupidity, one ought not to expect him to have more consideration for us. Apart from the contempt into which we [*i.e.* the Europeans generally] have fallen since this event, it is inevitable that we should experience considerable outrages on the smallest pretext—of which there will be no want. We are no longer able to do anything in our factory, either in construction or demolition, which does not give offence, and which is not treated as a crime on our part. The Government at Hugli[1] now treats us with unbearable haughtiness, stops the course of our business and cheats us without any pretence in the simplest matters, so that even a solitary *peon*

[1] The residence of the *Faujdar*, or military governor of the province.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

thinks he has the right to come and insult us in our own town. With such dispositions you can easily guess, sir, what are the intentions of the Moors, and how difficult it will be to escape from the hold which they think they have over us. It is then absolutely necessary if the Company wishes to preserve this factory with its privileges and to assure its commerce, which otherwise will be in great danger, that it should put us on another footing, or that it should expect not only exorbitant and excessively onerous expenses, but even worse things. We have relied too much on the protection and goodwill of those who governed the country in previous times; we have also counted too much on the interest they have in protecting the [foreign] nations, and if this security has had [in the past] the success which we promised ourselves from it, then it can no longer have such success now owing to the mode of thinking of the new Nawab, who acts on other principles or rather upon those of Aliverdikhan his predecessor, who took the greatest umbrage against the Europeans for what had passed upon the [Madras] coast. Old age prevented him from executing his designs, but he took care to suggest them to the present Nawab, as I have been assured, in recommending him to humiliate the Europeans and to act so as to reduce them to the condition of the people of the country. If that is his plan, as one can hardly doubt from the disposition which we see him in, what inconvenience will not result from it for us and the commerce of the Company! Besides the continual outrages to which we shall be exposed on the part of the Government, of which we are already beginning to have the saddest experience, even the people who are in our service, being no longer restrained by any motive of consideration or of fear, will be the first to fail us and will give us no account except when and how they like to do so.

You will see, sir, from what I have said, that there is only one means to hinder a result so injurious to our privileges and to the interests of the Company, and that is to put ourselves in a condition to make ourselves respected. It is not a question of making war on the Nawab or of trading at the point of the sword—I know these are incompatible with the objects of our Establishment—but it is necessary that we should have a garrison of at least 500 Europeans to support us on occasion; the Moors if they saw us capable of

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

self-defence would not readily dare to insult us, and I think our commerce would go on with more safety and ease. If we had had this number of men when the contribution was demanded, we would have disputed the matter with him, and possibly forced him to restrict his pretentions to the *nazarani* of 30 or 40 thousand rupees, which we are accustomed to pay at every change of the Nawab. I own the expenses would be heavier, but as they are a necessity it is for the Company to proportion its trade accordingly. The flight of the English, whom I do not think in a condition to re-establish themselves quickly, opens to the Company an efficacious way of recouping itself advantageously. The Nawab appears to hold that nation in aversion, and if he persists in these sentiments, as he may well do, especially if our commerce increases, they will attempt to re-enter their Establishments only in vain unless they do so by force. If I am to believe the servants of their Company, of whom some are well qualified to speak, it will not for a long time be in a position to pay the expenses which will be necessary to re-establish it here by a composition, not to speak of force, estimating the loss which they have just had at 50 *lakhs* exclusive of the Establishments themselves. However this may be their colony of Calcutta being entirely ruined and their credit lost, it is hardly possible, even if they re-establish themselves promptly, that they can give their commerce the same extent as heretofore.

* * * * *

Yours, &c. &c. RENAULT.

Permit, I pray you, that Madame Dupleix may find here a thousand assurances of my respects.

87. *Letter from Mr. Manningham to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Massulipatam Pettah, 28 August, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—I had the honour to forward from Vizagapatam and Bandarmalanka two copies of the dispatches from Bengall advising your Honour, &c., of the Governour and Councill having deputed me with Monsieur Le Beaume to entreat the aid and succours of your Presidency in order to effect the re-establishment of our Settlement in Calcutta. I had flattered myself with

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

hopes of a speedy journey, but the violent rains in this part of the country, together with a failure in our *palankeen* bearers (from the difficulty and fatigue in travelling through a country overflowed) impedes our passage to such a degree we greatly fear our arrival at Madras will be very late. Considering therefore the pressing occasion of our being deputed to your Honour, &c., and the necessity of the Bengall affairs, which require our greatest diligence being exerted, we have been induced (in earnest hopes of obtaining the desired end) to pursue the remainder of the journey separately. Your Honour, &c., will therefore receive this by Monsieur Le Beaume, a gentleman fully capable of acquainting you with the nature of the supplies needful and operations necessary to be performed. I have furnished Monsieur Le Beaume[1] with bearers and some *seapoys* well acquainted with the road, and have great hopes by the favour of M. Moracien to obtain the assistance of horses at the different Settlements under his command in this province, which may enable Monsieur Le Beaume to proceed with greater expedition, and prove a resource in case the *palankeen* boys are incapable of pursuing the journey.

I have, &c. &c. CHARLES MANNINGHAM.

88. *Translation of a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to the Council, Masulipatam, dated 29 August,* 1756.[2]

GENTLEMEN,—We take advantage of the departure to-day of the ship *L'Union* to acknowledge receipt of the letter you did us the honour to write on the 21st of last month by the *Sieur Contest.*[3]

No event of importance has happened in this country since the capture of Calcutta, and the English have not as yet made any movement. All who were made prisoners have been sent back by the Nawab and have joined their ships. Several craft have joined them from the [Madras] coast, but amongst these only one, a Company's ship, has brought 240 soldiers from Madras.

There is little likelihood that with so small a reinforcement

[1] The Council of Fort St. George decided (September 6, 1756) that 'Monsieu Le Beaume being a Frenchman, the Board do not think it advisable to give him any insight into their affairs or intentions.'

[2] Pondicherry Records.

[3] The MS. has *Sr. Contest.* Broome writes *Saint Contest.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

they will undertake any enterprise, being also destitute of many things necessary for doing so. The rumour is that they have been trying for some time to arrange matters with the Nawab so as to be readmitted to their Settlement, but have not been successful. It is now said that their ships of war have arrived at Madras and that strong forces are assembling there to revenge the affront given to their nation. It is to be presumed that if they delay some time longer, these here will determine to . . . and for this will avail themselves of the little monsoon.[1] Some assert that they will probably wait for orders from Europe before undertaking anything.

The Prussian ship[2] has just been lost whilst entering the Ganges owing to the fault of the English pilot. Only the crew and money were saved.

89. *Letter from Council at Fulta to Court of Directors, dated 17 September*, 1756.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURS,—1. As it is probable a vessel may be dispatched for Europe by the President and Council of Fort St. George or some other nation settled on the coast and a conveyance offering from hence to Vizagapatam, we think it our duty to give Your Honours some account of an event which must be of the utmost consequence to your trade. It is with the greatest concern we find ourselves under the necessity of transmitting Your Honours such disagreeable news, and shall beg leave to confine ourselves to generals for the present referring to a future address for the particulars of this affair.

2. Upon the receipt of your packett by the *Delawar* we thought it necessary to put ourselves in the best posture of defence we could, and for that purpose gave directions to have the line of guns towards the river repaired and strengthened. While we were carrying on this work a *perwannah* arrived from the Nabob Surajud Dowla (who had succeeded to the Government upon the death of Alyver de Cawn) forbidding us to erect any new works, or dig a ditch which he was informed we were doing.

[1] The cold weather (*Memoirs of Lally*, p. 96).

[2] The *Prince Henry of Prussia*, wrecked by the misconduct of Hendrick Walters, an English pilot, whom the Board dismissed for his carelessness.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

3. As we esteemed this a very unreasonable prohibition, the President made the following reply by the approbation and consent of the Board; that we were not erecting any new fortifications, but only repairing our wharf which had been much damaged by the Freshes, and that he had been misinformed in regard to the ditch, having dug none since the invasion of the Marrattoes which had been executed by the request of our inhabitants and with the approbation of Alyver de Cawn himself; that we had received advice of there being a likelihood of a rupture between the French and us, and as they had disregarded the neutrality of the *Mogul's* dominions in the last war by attacking Madrass, we were under some apprehensions of their making some attempts upon our Settlement should there be a declaration of war between the two nations, for which reason we thought it necessary to be upon our guard and make our place as defensible as we could.

4. The Nabob was at that time encamped at Rajamaul, and the gentlemen at Cossimbuzar a few days after informed us that he was much incensed at the foregoing reply and had ordered their factory to be invested with a party of horsemen. This was confirmed in a second letter from them with advice that a large body of troops were actually placed upon them, and that more were daily expected, for which reason they desired a reinforcement of military and a supply of stores. Another letter from those gentlemen advised us that troops were daily stationed on them, that the Nabob himself was returning from Rajamaul, that a Train of artillery was ordered to be planted against them, and that he threatened to attack their factory as soon as he arrived. In this letter they requested us to complain against Hukumbeg and his *duan*, for their extortions of late years, as they looked upon them to be the instigators of these disturbances.

5. Upon the receipt of this letter, we transmitted them a blank *arasdass* for them to insert the complaint against Hukumbeg and his *duan*, as they who were on the spot must be the best judges what to write, and directed them to remonstrate in that *arasdass* the injury done us in surrounding our factory upon so frivolous and unjust a pretence; the falsity of which he might be satisfied of by sending a person to examine and report the works we were carrying on. We likewise ordered them to endeavour all in their

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

power to accomodate the matter, but on no account to mention the demolition of any works; that in the present situation of affairs we thought it more adviseable to sooth the Nabob than to provoke him, which sending up a reinforcement might occasion, and therefore we thought it best to defer the supply they had requested, and directed them that in case the Nabob carried matters to extremity and attacked their factory to make the best defence they could till the waters rose, and then to retreat with their garrison to Calcutta.

6. Two other letters arrived from Mr. Watts and his Council with intelligence of a further number of troops having surrounded their factory, and that the Nabob was daily expected at Muxadavad, when it was imagined they would actually be attacked. In the former of these letters they informed us that one of the principal *jummadars* placed upon them, told their doctor, the Nabob was angry with the English on no other account than a drawbridge we had built at Perrins and an octagon at Mr. Kelsall's garden, and that if we would destroy those works the forces would be immediately taken off their factory. In consequence of which information they gave it as their opinion, if the President would address the Nabob and promise to demolish the drawbridge and octagon the affair would be accomodated.

7. This letter was taken into consideration by the Board and for many strong reasons it was judged more adviseable to promise the demolition of those works than hazard a rupture with the Nabob at a juncture that we were so little prepared for it. Accordingly an *arasdass* was wrote to that effect and triplicate of it forwarded to the Chief and Council at Cossimbuzar for them to get delivered. These letters Messrs. Watts and Collet acquaint us were not received while the factory remained in our hands.

8. On the 7th June we received the disagreeable news of Cossimbuzar factory being delivered up to the Nabob, who had made Mr. Watts a prisoner upon his going to visit him, that the Nabob on his arrival before Cossimbuzar demanded the Chief to come out and see him, the Nabob's *duan*, who commanded the van of the army, writing the Chief a letter that he might come out with great safety, that he would introduce him to the Nabob. Upon this it was thought proper to send the surgeon of the factory to

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the *duan*, who returned and assured the Chief he might go out with great security; from these assurances and the *pachowterah droogah* (or collector of the Customs) being sent by the *duan* to the Chief with a present of *beetle* and to conduct him to the *duan* who was to introduce him to the Nabob, he by the advice and opinion of all the gentlemen of the factory and officer of the garrison went and was by the *duan* presented to the Nabob, who ordered him into confinement, and forced him to sign a *mutchulka* to the following purport; that we should give no protection to the King's subjects, that we should destroy any new fortifications we had raised and fill up the new ditch, and that if it could be proved, we had granted *dusticks* to any persons that were not entitled to them, the loss sustained by the Government in the Custom should be made good by the Company. These letters likewise informed us the Nabob intended to march to Calcutta with his whole army which now amounted to 50,000 men, besides a very large Train of artillery.

9. Upon the receipt of this intelligence, we thought it expedient to put our town (which was extremely open towards the land) in the best posture of defence we could by throwing up such outworks as the shortness of our time would admit of, comformable to plans laid before us for that purpose, which was accordingly executed. The militia were likewise summoned and trained, and everything in our power prepared to sustain our attack in case the Nabob should be rash enough to carry matters to that extremity.

10. The 16th of June the van of his army appeared before the redoubt at Perrins, and about one in the afternoon attempted to force a passage that way in the town, but were bravely repulsed by the party stationed there, numbers of them being killed, which made them decamp in the night from thence, and enter the town from the eastward, at which quarter it was not in our power to prevent their getting in. On the morning of the 18th they begun the attack of our Lines, and after a very warm fire the whole day, one of our batteries were obliged to retreat; which made it necessary to recall the rest that they might not be cut off by the enemy in the rear.

11. The next morning they commenced a brisk fire upon the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

fort which they continued the whole day and great part of Sunday the 20th; and having gained possession of the several houses near the factory and the church, they destroyed a great many of our officers and private men, who being harassed out with continual duty and the enemy overpowering us with their numbers, the walls were scaled on the evening of the 20th, and the fort surrendered upon promise of their civil treatment of the prisoners.

12. We have now given your Honours a summary relation of the Nabob's proceedings at Cossimbuzar, his march against Calcutta, the attack and capture of that place.

13. There being some country vessels in the river, such of the inhabitants as could escape have been confined in them and suffered the greatest distress, most of them having lost every thing they had and scarce saved the cloaths on their backs, which has induced us to take the liberty of maintaining them at Your Honours' expence, which we flatter ourselves will not be disapproved of, when it is considered how general the calamity has been, and what numbers had it not in their power to subsist themselves by any means whatever.

14. Our remaining here so long has been owing to our judging it absolutely necessary to keep the river in order to re-establish ourselves in these provinces, for which purpose we have applied to the President and Council of Fort Saint George to assist us with all the force they can possibly spare from the calls of their own Coast, and have deputed Charles Manningham Esq. to satisfye them of the necessity of exerting themselves on this occasion for recovering Your Honours' Settlements, rights and priviledges in these provinces. As yet we have received no answer from those gentlemen though we daily expect one, and we hope they will not refuse or delay sending us down a considerable body of troops as soon as they received our letter upon that head, as their arrival at this juncture would enable us to re-establish Your Honours in all the priviledges and immunities of the royal *phirmaund*, the country being involved in troubles by the appointment of another *Subah* from Dilly who is joined by some royal troops and several considerable *jummadars* that have deserted Surajud Dowla. There is likewise an invasion expected from the Marrattoes as soon as the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Rains take off, and by the intelligence we have received from Cossimbuzar the Nabob is greatly embarrassed.

15. We have likewise applied to the President and Council of Bombay for a supply of troops, and in case those two Presidencys give us the necessary assistance, we may hope in a short time to acquaint Your Honours of our being resettled upon a secure and respectable footing.

16. The gentlemen at Luckipore and Bulramgurry have safely withdrawn their factories pursuant to our orders and brought away all their military stores with what cash and effects were laying in their respective factories. Those at Dacca could not do the same for want of conveyances, all their boats being seized by the Nabob of that place, but were obliged to surrender after they heard of the loss of Fort William.

17. By the next conveyances we shall transmit Your Honours copys of our proceedings since the loss of Calcutta, with the cash account and what other papers are material.

And are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, WM. WATTS, JAMES KILLPATRICK, RICHARD BECHER, PAUL RICHARD PEARKES, WM. FRANKLAND, M. COLLET, J. *Z.* HOLWELL, W. MACKETT, P. AMYATT, T. BODDAM.

90. *Letter from Council at Fulta to Council, Fort Saint George, dated 17 September,* 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—Enclosed is duplicate of our address under date the 18th ultimo, since which we have received advices from Cossimbuzar that we think proper to communicate to your Honour &c. with our sentiments and resolution thereon.

Mr. Warren Hastings, one of the Honourable Company's covenanted servants at Cossimbuzar and now detained at that place by the Nabob writes Major Killpatrick to the following purport, that Surrajah Doulat is no longer *Subah* of Bengal which is conferred on the King of Delhi eldest son, that the Nabob of Perenea (Soukat Jung) has received a *phirmaund* from the King investing him with the Nabobship of Bengal, Bahar, and Orixa under his son, and great preparations are making at Muxadavad for a war with Perenea in consequence of the foregoing appoint-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

ments, that the Nabob of Bannaras has sent 6,000 horsemen to the assistance of Soukat Jung, that most of the *rajahs* whose territories lie near Perenea have deserted Surrajah Doulat, and that on the 29th of last month a letter arrived from the Dutch chief at Patna with advice that the King, with his son and vizier was upon his march this way at the head of a formidable army, having crossed the River Jumna 20 days before with an intention first to reduce these provinces to his obedience, and afterwards to visit all the other parts of his dominions, that the Morattas likewise are expected soon, it being reported they have imprisoned the person sent to pay them their annual *chout*, with which they are not contented, and that Mirza Sallah the Nabob of Cuttack has joined them. That the Nabob begins to be much troubled at the impending dangers, and his *jemmidars* seem not very inclinable to serve him with that zeal which his present desperate circumstances require against their king, as they may expect to be treated like rebels, most of the principal of them having a great part of their fortunes, and some their families at Delhi. That notwithstanding all this, Surrajah Doulat is raising a great army, and extorting as much money as he can get from the *rajahs* and other people that are so unfortunate as to lie under his power, not sparing the Europeans.

The above is the substance of Mr. Hastings' information, upon which we beg leave to make the following remarks. First, that the whole of it is not affirmed by the gentleman to be matter of fact, and that in all probability great part of it may be no more than a report raised by the enemies of Surrajah Doulat, next that Surrajah Doulat is possessed of such immense riches, and has so large an army on foot, that it is very possible he will be able to extricate himself by one means or other from the dangers which threaten him at present, lastly, should he be cut off or expelled from his *subahship* we should find immense difficulties to re-establish ourselves in the priviledges and grants which the royal *phirmaund* sets forth, and upon a proper and secure footing, unless we can support our demands with a sufficient and respectable military force; These reasons we flatter ourselves will convince your Honour &c. of the necessity of assisting us to the utmost of your power for recovering the Honourable Company's Settlements,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

rights and priviledges in these provinces notwithstanding the intelligence we have received from Cossimbuzar.

We do not write this intelligence as a certainty or with any intention to check the resolutions you may have come to for the assisting us, but if you should be prevented from sending us so considerable a force, as we could wish, and have requested, by advice of a rupture between the Crowns of Great Britain and France, we are then to desire you will supply us with as large a number of military and artillery as you may judge consistent with the safety of the Honourable Company's possessions on your Coast, that we may be ready and in a condition to make use of any turn in our favor, for which purpose and in hopes of your Honour &c. complying with our request, we are determined to keep the river till we receive your answer and are ascertained if we may expect a further reinforcement, without which we apprehend it will be impossible to re-establish ourselves in Bengal.

We beg leave to remark that could we regain our Settlement during the troubles in the country, it would be of the utmost consequence in recovering our priviledges, which we should find extremely difficult as well as expensive, if the Government should be settled before we repossess our colony. This consideration we flatter ourselves will have its due weight with your Honor &c. and we make no doubt will influence your resolutions for sending us as large a force to our assistance as you can possibly spare from the calls on your Coast, and that as early as you conveniently can.

Enclosed we transmit you the return of military and military stores now in our fleet, and are sorry to observe to your Honor &c. that sickness greatly prevails among them, having lost Captain Godwin, Lieutenant Sampson, Lieutenant Erdman, Ensign Vouga, and Ensign Walcott belonging to this establishment, and private men dead and now sick upwards of an hundred.

When Captain Dogan left Bengal in the month of May, he carried away some freight belonging to the Moors, which was retained in his sloop and by us demanded of him, but he peremptorily refused to deliver it upon our receipt, which we beg leave to mention to your Honor &c. that you may take proper notice of his behavior.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Enclosed we transmit you a packet for the Honourable Company which we request you will forward by any vessel that may be under dispatch for Europe from your Coast, and we likewise enclose a packet for the President and Council of Bombay to be forwarded by *pattamar* or shipping as you may judge most expeditious.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, WILLIAM WATTS, JAMES KILLPATRICK, RICHARD BECHER, PAUL RICHARD PEARKES, WILLIAM FRANKLAND, MATTHEW COLLET, J. Z. HOLWELL, WILLIAM MACKETT, P. AMYATT, THOMAS BODDAM.

91. *Opinion of the Select Committee (Fort Saint George) as to the conditions of the expedition to Bengal.*[1]

1. As it may be supposed that one or more of the men of war will be sent before Calcutta, and the Moors driven out by her cannon, it is requested of Mr. Watson that he will land Colonel Clive with the Company's troops or a part of them to take possession again of that Settlement, and whatever may be found within the Company's limits as usually understood, from Perrin's garden down to Surman's garden, for the sole benefit of the Company, which request it is hoped will be thought reasonable as the Company have suffered an immense loss, and are to be at the whole expence of the expedition.

2. Should it be judged proper by the Company's representatives after the taking of Calcutta to request the assistance of the squadron to attack Hughly or any other Moors' town, or to make reprizals in the river upon Moors' vessells, it is hoped it will not be thought unreasonable that commissaries be appointed on both sides to dispose of the prizes that may be so taken, their produce to be deposited untill it shall be determined by His Majesty in what manner it should be distributed: A gratuity to be given for the present at the discretion of the Council of War, to the petty officers and private men, and to be deducted out of the portion which may be allotted to them.

[1] Fort Saint George Public Consultations, 29 September, 1756.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

92. *Extract from Fort Saint George Select Committee Consultations,* 1 *October,* 1756.

Arguments offered by Mr. Orme on the subject of the present question, in which argument Mr. Clive declares he concurs.

Since Mr. Manningham's arrival what has happened to alter the resolution of the 21st September?

Mr. Manningham says much to exculpate the gentlemen of Calcutta from the two points which are principally esteemed the causes of the loss of that place:

1st, The protection of the Nabob's tenants.

2nd, The not endeavouring to pacifie him when incensed.

But an inquisition of this kind is in my opinion not of the resort of this Board. It belongs to our Masters, the East India Company.

More, Mr. Manningham says, that the resolutions of the Council held by us September 21st, take away all power from the gentlemen at Fulta. That they are absolutely Governor and Council, and are so by Act of Parliament, that for his own particular he shall quit the service, that he believes the rest of the gentlemen now of the Council will do so too, as subordination and all good government will be destroyed and no more respect be paid to them.

What weight is this to have with us?

Shall the resolutions of Council of the 21st September be changed or no?

I cannot see any reason for altering the resolution of the 21st September. A particular tenderness to avoid a determination on the authority of the gentlemen of Calcutta has been exerted. The expedient of sending deputies to give orders to the military and to manage that part of the Company's property which shall be sent from this Settlement to Bengal, was thought by me a mean between two extremes. The one extreme that of declaring the authority of the gentlemen of Bengal absolutely null and void. The other extreme, that of putting so large a force and so large a part of the Company's property entirely under the disposal of those gentlemen. It is with great pain that I now find myself

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

obliged to declare that when the majority of this Board were of opinion that the authority of the gentlemen at Bengal was as valid as ever, I, with Colonel Clive, thought that opinion liable to objections and it is not minuted that that opinion was unanimous but that the majority were of that opinion. I have never met with the particular Act of Parliament referred to by Mr. Manningham and wait with impatience to see it. But I think I can venture to say that I know, had the town and garrison of Calcutta belonged to a Prince instead of the East India Company, the Governor from whom it had been taken could never have reassumed his authority there untill the pleasure of his Prince had been known. And this paralell for want of the Act of Parliament is all I have to judge by, and it influences my opinion so strongly, though perhaps erroneously, that were I in the case of the gentlemen of Bengal, I would sooner reassume my lost authority in Calcutta from the donation of the Presidency of Madras, than I would assert it from my own authority, as in the one case I should proceed to act from the best authority I could get, and those who invested me with it would be responsible for the consequences till the pleasure of my Masters was known, whereas taking this authority as an indisputable right till that can be proved without contradiction, would subject me, if it should not be proved at all, to immense difficulties. These reasons I beg leave to add to those which are fully explained in the Consultation of the 21st September as determining me to think there is no occasion to alter the plan there digested. As to the authority of the Chiefs of Calcutta diminished by this deputation as urged by Mr. Manningham, it concerns me extremely that it should be so, but in such complicated cases as these, many inconveniences must arise, and the authority of those gentlemen will never, in my opinion, be properly confirmed, till it is so by the orders of our Honourable Masters from Europe.

ROBERT CLIVE, ROBERT ORME.

Then the second question was put: Who are to be esteemed the proper representatives of the Company in Bengal, and under whose direction is the intended expedition to be carried on?

Whereupon it was resolved that Roger Drake Esq., Colonel

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Lawrence when present, Mr. Watts, Mr. Manningham and Mr. Becher, the Select Committee appointed for that Presidency, joined to Colonel Clive, are to be esteemed the proper representatives of the Company at Bengal, that they be desired to form and deliver to Colonel Clive a plan for the conduct of such treaty as they shall recommend to be made for the best advantage of the Company with the Nabob of Bengal; and also a plan of such military operations as they would recommend to be carried on against the Nabob untill he shall consent to such terms as the treaty may be concluded on.

But as the Committee think they could not answer putting the Company to the expence of fitting out this armament without taking at the same time all possible precautions to secure to them equivalent advantages, not merely the retaking of Calcutta but the re-establishment of their several former Settlements with all the priviledges granted them by the *Great Mogul*, and as the Committee have an entire confidence in Colonel Clive's abilities and that he will exert his utmost endeavors to carry this our design into full execution, whereas it might not impossibly meet with interruptions or delays from divisions of opinion among the Bengal gentlemen, if it depended totally on them:

Therefore it is agreed that Colonel Clive be further instructed to weigh and consider well the plans he shall receive from the before mentioned Select Committee of Bengal, and in case he shall judge any part of them not to tend to the most speedy and efficacious method of obtaining the hoped for advantages to the Company, then to give his best advice on the subject to those gentlemen, and in case their opinions should still differ, then finally to pursue those measures which he shall judge to be most for the Company's benefit, transmitting to us in a very explicit manner his reasons for such a proceeding, which reasons shall be referred to the Court of Directors.

Thus the Committee are of opinion they have removed as far as in them lies all obstacles to the compleat execution of their intentions in sending this armament to Bengal, supposing that a war is not declared with France; for upon the first news of such a declaration, we shall hold it absolutely necessary to recall all the troops to the coast, except so many as will be necessary for the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

immediate defence of Calcutta, esteeming the certain advantages of the Settlements and inland possessions of the Company on this Coast to be more worthy of attention than the uncertain hopes of regaining their Settlements in Bengal.

Therefore the Committee think it necessary to furnish Colonel Clive with independent powers on this head also, that in case upon the news of a war or other emergency it should be found necessary to recall a part of the troops for the defence of this Coast, and the Select Committe at Bengal should not think proper to return them upon our representation, then that Colonel Clive do follow the orders of this Committee and proceed hither with such part of the troops as shall be necessary, leaving only as many as may be requisite for the defence of Calcutta.

Messrs. Clive and Orme being asked whether they assent to the resolutions made upon the second question, deliver in the following answer:

In answer to this question, we beg leave to refer to the 4th article of the plan of instructions intended to be delivered to the deputies then resolved to be sent, as entered in the Consultations of the Council held September 21st which says:

'That the deputies be directed to re-establish the gentlemen of Bengall in Calcutta as soon as Colonel Clive's success shall render it *proper*, and that they do, when the place is in a sufficient state of security, put those gentlemen in possession of all such part of the Company's effects as shall remain with them.'

By this resolution which Colonel Clive and Mr. Orme then agreed to with the rest of the Council, it appears that they had no objection to entrusting the gentlemen of Calcutta, after the service of the deputies to be sent was at an end.

It is now determined that the deputies shall not go; therefore Messrs. Clive and Orme think as they did the 21st September that, in lieu of deputies the gentlemen of Bengal are to be empowered; and therefore as the resolution of 21st September is laid aside, declare that they can think of no better expedient than that now resolved by the majority of this Board.

At the same time they beg leave to recommend to the serious consideration of the Board the necessary measures to be taken

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

that the gentlemen of Bengal may enter into our sentiments on the seclusion of plunder &c. to the Company's use.

ROBERT CLIVE, ROBERT ORME.

93. *Translation of an extract from a letter to the Directors at Paris, dated Isle-de-France, 2 October* 1756.[1]

The affairs of the English also seem in great confusion throughout all India. M. de Leyrit writes that the last letters received by him from Chandernagore inform him that the Nawab of Bengal has taken possession of the English factory at Cossimbazar though it was protected by four strong bastions, that this Nawab proposes to besiege Golgotha,[2] and that the English are preparing to send there 500 of the Company's troops from Madras, which will be replaced by a King's regiment, &c. &c.

94. *Letter from Colonel Clive to his Father, dated Fort Saint George, 5 October*, 1756.

HONOURED SIR,—The expedition to Bengal which I am upon the point of undertaking will not allow me to write a long letter. I hope to write you fully and to your satisfaction by the next conveyance.

I have desired my attorneys to pay you the interest arising from all my moneys in England and the Bishop of Clenforts (?) annuity which is all in my power at present, having lost over £3,000 on the *Doddington* and I fear a greater sum at Bengal. This expedition if attended with success may enable me to do great things. It is by far the grandest of my undertakings. I go with great forces and great authority.

I have desired Mrs. Clive, who has nothing else to do, to write you all particulars and I am with duty to my mother and affection to my brothers and sisters,

Honoured Sir,—Your most dutiful and obedient son, ROBERT CLIVE.

[1] Archives Nationales, Paris.

[2] Calcutta.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

95. *A Return of the Strength of the Troops ordered for Bengal, 5 October, 1756.*

Fort Saint George, 8th October, 1756.	Lieutenant-Colonel.	Captains.	Captain-Lieutenants.	Lieutenants.	Ensigns.	Volunteers.	Sergeants.	Corporals.	Drummers.	Centinels.	Bombardiers.	Gunners.	Matrosses.	Total.
Train of Artillery ...	—	—	1	5	—	—	5	5	3	—	21	21	48	103
Grenadiers	—	1	—	1	2	2	8	6	4	94	—	—	—	112
Captain Maskelyne's	—	1	—	1	2	2	6	6	4	73	—	—	—	89
Captain Gauppe's ...	—	1	—	2	1	2	4	6	4	77	—	—	—	91
Captain Campbell's ...	—	1	—	1	2	1	6	6	4	73	—	—	—	89
Captain Callender's ...	—	1	—	—	3	1	6	6	4	73	—	—	—	89
Total	—	5	1	10	10	8	35	35	23	390	21	21	48	573

N.B.—2 captains, 2 lieutenants 4
2 sergeant-majors, 1 quartermaster sergeant, 1 corporal 4
and 12 camp colourmen not returned in the body of the Return ... 12 20
593

ROBERT CLIVE, *Lieutenant-Colonel.*

96. *Extracts from a letter from Colonel Clive to William Mabbot, Esq.; dated Fort Saint George, 6 October, 1756.*

Providence who is the disposer of all events has thought proper to inflict the greatest calamity that ever happened to the English nation in these parts, I mean the loss of Calcutta attended with the greatest mortifications to the Company and the most barbarous and cruel circumstances to the poor inhabitants.

This unhappy news has called me to the Presidency and the gentlemen thereof have thought proper to put me at the head of this expedition for the recovery of Calcutta, the Company's losses, rights and privileges.

* * * * *

I am not so apprehensive of the Nabob of Bengal's forces as of being recalled by the news of a war or checked in our progress by the woods and swampiness of the country which is represented as almost impassable for a train of artillery.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

97. *Extract from a letter from Colonel Clive to Roger Drake, Esq., Senior, dated Fort Saint George, 7 October,* 1756.

A general calamity such as this must affect every well-wisher to his country and I am sure it must you in particular. I cannot help feeling for your nephew's misfortunes and if I did not my obligations to you would entitle Mr. Drake to all the respect and all the services in my power. I hope to have the pleasure of re-establishing him at Calcutta in a condition of recovering all the Company's and his own losses allso.

My best wishes attend Mrs. Drake and all the family, and I am with esteem, &c. &c.

98. *Translation of an extract from a letter from M. Baussett to M. le Marquis Dupleix, dated Chandernagore, 8 October,* 1753.[1]

Since my last letter, sir, surprising events have occurred in this country. The old Nawab, Aliverdikhan is dead, his grandson who has succeeded him, first made terms with Mansur Ali Khan, formerly *wazir* of the *Mogol*, who was marching with a considerable army to make war upon him and to make himself master by force of this *subah*, but a considerable sum, which the young heir caused to be paid him, has satisfied him, and he has gone back again. The latter, to find an opportunity of recouping himself for the money he has just paid, has taken it into his head to pick a quarrel with the [European] nations. He raised a considerable army, and presented himself before Cossimbazar to take the English factory, which, by the way, was well fortified and well provided with munitions of war. The Chief was advised to go out and enquire from the Nawab what reason he had for declaring war on the English. He went with his second in office, without a safe-conduct, to the Nawab, who caused him to be arrested and bound, after which he took possession of the factory. All the English, men and women, were obliged to go out, and a garrison was placed in it.

M. Law, the French Chief in the above-mentioned place, received all the ladies by the Nawab's permission, on condition

[1] Bibliothèque Nationale MSS., Paris.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

that he would be responsible for them as English people. The Nawab then marched with all his army to Calcutta to besiege it. He sent and asked M. Renault, our Director at Chandernagore, for assistance, and offered to give him Calcutta for the Company when it should be captured. The Prince wrote to the same effect to M. de Leyrit. You will see in the Chandernagore correspondence what has been written on this subject.

It has been written from Chandernagore that the Nawab sent a letter and a *betel* to M. Drake, Governor of Calcutta, doubtless for the purpose of coming to some terms or other. He received the messenger very badly, trampled the letter and the *betel* under his feet, and told the messenger that that would show what he thought of anything that came to him from his master, and to go and inform him that he was waiting for him to come himself in order that he might rub his beard with a piece of pork. These expressions were very insulting and offensive; you ought not to be surprised if the young and conceited Prince, who is also naturally very vicious, swore the destruction of this beautiful and brilliant colony.

You will, doubtless, think that the English Governor after such an insult and misplaced bragging, would have put himself in a condition of defence, that he would have made the best disposition he could of the 200 troops he had under good officers and that he would have armed the inhabitants of whom he had four thousand fit to carry muskets. Not at all. He received all the wealth which the great merchants and all the private persons brought to him to be in safety in the factory—over 3 *crores*, *i.e.*, 300 *lakhs*—and placed it in a ship upon which he had embarked 80 men, the commandant of the troops, and 2 councillors, and abandoned the place two days before the Nawab captured it. The Nawab entered [the town] on the 20th June, his troops broke down the gates of the factory with hatchets, killed many of the English including two other Councillors whom they made prisoners. They put in prison more than 120 persons, men and women, and forgot them there for seven days [? hours] at the end of which time when it was opened, only 14 came out alive, the rest were dead.

All the inhabitants, merchants, half-castes and Armenians, came out destitute of clothing [*lit.* in their shirts]. Our gentlemen

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

at Chandernagore received the ladies and many of the Englishmen by the Nawab's permission.

The Nawab of Dacca had orders to take by force the English factory in that town, but M. Courtin, our Chief, showed so much tact in quieting every one that the English consented in writing to evacuate [the factory] with their ladies and without taking anything with them, on condition that they should be prisoners on *parole*, and that M. Courtin would be responsible for them if authorized by the Council of Chandernagore. This act of humanity has done him much honour. Calcutta taken, the Nawab came to spend a few days at Hugli, where he ordered the European Chiefs to visit him.

He has demanded from the Company altogether 400,000 rupees and as much from the Dutch. His troops have plundered everywhere, they have committed the most dreadful robberies in our villages of Chandernagore without M. Renault daring to complain of them.

There is everything to fear from this Prince in the future. They write from Madras that he is going to raze Calcutta to the ground. This is a terrible blow for the English Company. It would have been better for it to lose all its factories on the Coromandel Coast than this colony, so beautiful, so rich, so flourishing, which was established over 100 years ago.[1]

The Governor of Calcutta and all of both sexes who could embark themselves, have retired to Fulta where they have been sent succours of all kinds from Madras to enable them to retake [Calcutta]. We are informed from Madras that the royal ships are going there [Fulta] with 800 soldiers and 1,500 sepoys. We do not yet know if the King's regiment[2] has yet embarked. It appears that they will try to retake the place, fortify themselves there, increase their strength, and that they will even go and attack the Nawab in his capital.

It would be well for us to profit by the present circumstances to fortify ourselves at Chandernagore, and that 400 men should be sent to us. This would give offence to the English and force them to ask for our alliance or enable us to join the Nawab if the

[1] The English colony was originally at Hugli, and not at Calcutta.

[2] The 39th, under Colonel Adlercron.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

English wish to act in this country as they have done on the [Madras] Coast. M. de Leyrit has felt the effects of it severely. In sending us troops it is necessary to send money also, that is what we want at Chandernagore.

In January we shall know perfectly both their operations and their designs. I will inform you of them. In these parts we have to fortify Chandernagore, Cossimbazar and Dacca, there is no use in thinking of Patna, it is too far away.

99. *Translation of a letter from M. Duval de Leyrit to the Council, Fort Saint George, dated Pondicherry, 9 October, 1756.*

SIR,—I have the honour to send you the enclosed letter which the Nawab of Bengal has written to you. It was forwarded to me by M. Renault, Director and Commandant at Chandernagore, and reached me recently by the frigate *La Gloire* which was despatched to us from that direction. I beg you will acknowledge its receipt.

I have, &c., &c.

100. *Extract from a letter from Colonel Clive to the Secret Committee, London, dated Fort Saint George, 11 October, 1756.*

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN,—From many hands you will hear of the capture of Calcutta by the Moors, and the chain of misfortunes and losses which have happened to the Company in particular and to the nation in general. Every breast seems filled with grief, horror and resentment, indeed it is too sad a tale to unfold and I must beg leave to refer you to the general letters, Consultations and Committees which will give you a full account of this catastrophe.

Upon this melancholy occasion the Governour and Council thought proper to summons me to this place. As soon as an expedition was resolved upon I offered my service which at last was accepted, and I am upon the point of embarking on board His Majesty's squadron with a fine body of Europeans full of spirit and resentment for the insults and barbarities inflicted on so many British subjects.

I flatter myself that this expedition will not end with the re-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

taking of Calcutta only, and that the Company's estate in these parts will be settled in a better and more lasting condition than ever.

There is less reason to apprehend a check from the Nabob's forces than from the nature of the climate and country. The news of a war may likewise interfere with the success of this expedition. However should that happen and hostilities be committed in India, I hope we shall be able to dispossess the French of Charnagore (*sic*) and leave Calcutta in a state of defence.

101. *Letter from Council, Fort Saint George, to Colonel Clive, dated* 13 *October*, 1756.

SIR,—Judging the re-establishment of the Company's Settlements at Bengal to be of the highest importance to their welfare, we have requested of Admiral Watson to proceed thither with the whole squadron under his command.

We have embarked on the several ships of the squadron, all officers included, 528 military and 109 Train, and on the Company's ships *Walpole* and *Malborough* with the *Boneta* ketch and those on board His Majesty's ships 940 *sepoys* and 160 *lascars* with twelve field-pieces, one haubitzer, and a necessary quantity of ammunition, and reposing full confidence in your abilities we have appointed you to be Commander-in-Chief of the land forces to be employed on the present expedition.

You are therefore to proceed with this command to Bengal. In the river you will probably meet with most of the gentlemen of the late Council, of whom the following have been this year appointed by the Secret Committee of the Honourable East India Company to be a Select Committee for the management of all matters relative to the protection or preservation of the Company's estate, rights and priviledges, *viz.* Roger Drake Esq., Colonel Lawrence when present, Messrs. Watts, Manningham and Becher.

To these gentlemen we have addressed a letter which we now deliver you together with a copy thereof, by which you will observe our intentions in fitting out this armament, and this letter will serve to guide you in acting up to the spirit of these intentions.

Conformably to these intentions we have desired the gentlemen of the Select Committee appointed as before mentioned to form and deliver you a plan of such treaty, as they would recommend

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

to be made for the best advantage of the Company with the Nabob of Bengal, and likewise a plan of such military operations, as they shall judge to be most likely to compel the Nabob to consent to the terms of the said treaty. They will probably desire your presence at their Councils. We need not recommend to you to assist them with your best advice, and we most earnestly require you to endeavour to preserve a good harmony throughout.

If any part of the plans you shall receive from the gentlemen before mentioned shall appear to you not to lead by the most speedy and effecatious (*sic*) way to the obtaining the hoped for advantages to the Company you will explain particularly your sentiments to those gentlemen, pointing out to them such alteration as you think will better answer the purposed end, in which alteration we flatter ourselves they then will concur. If not, you are empowered, and we do hereby empower you, to pursue such measures as you shall judge most conducive to the Company's benefit, transmitting to them, and to us, in the most particular manner, your reasons for so doing.

Our last advices from Europe have given us too much reason to fear there will be but a very short time for the execution of this project, it being our resolution, should we receive news of a war with France, immediately to recall you, and the greatest part of the troops for the defence of this Coast. Upon the receipt of such orders from us you are to leave so many men as you judge necessary for the immediate defence of Calcutta, and proceed hither with the rest without loss of time, notwithstanding any thing that may be urged to the contrary by the gentlemen of Bengal, for in such circumstances we cannot but regard the certain possession of the Establishments under our authority on this Coast, and in this country, to be an object of too great importance to the Company, not to employ our utmost attention. Should our orders for returning arrive with you before His Majesty's ships have left Bengal, you are to request of Admiral Watson, or the commander of the ships that may be there, to bring the troops to Madrass; but should none of His Majesty's ships remain with you, then you are to apply to the President and Council for such of the Company's ships as may be there, or employ such private vessels as may be procurable.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Enclosed is copy of a Council of War, held here by the officers of His Majesty's squadron the 30th September and 2nd October concerning the disposal of what may be taken from the Moors, with copies of three letters which passed between Mr. Watson and us on the same subject. As far as the shares of the sea forces are distributed we consent that the shares of such part of the land forces, as by their rank are to share with those sea forces, be distributed also. In case reprizals should be made, you are to consider jointly with Mr. Watson, and the Bengal Committee of the appointment of proper commissaries to take charge of the portion that is to be deposited.

We have appointed Mr. John Walsh to be paymaster of the forces to be employed on the present expedition, and Mr. Thomas Maunsell, commissary. They are to act in all things according to your orders, but we have delivered the paymaster for his guidance a copy of our military regulations relating to pay, *batta*,[1] &c., and a letter of instructions of which herewith is a copy.

Conformably to the paragraph of our Honourable Masters' commands therein referred to, no *batta*, or extraordinary allowance should be given to the troops in any of their garrisons, but as the state in which their Settlements at Bengal may be found is quite uncertain we leave it to you to regulate this in such a manner, as you shall see reasonable. When their Settlements are re-established and the inhabitants returned, so that provisions become plenty as usual, this order of our Honourable Masters must be strictly observed.

It has been customary here to diet the non-commissioned officers and soldiers in the field, instead of paying them *batta*, and this has always been done by contract. The last contract was 4 *fanams*[2] a day for each man, but as provisions have generally been much cheaper and more plenty at Bengal than on this Coast, we hope you will be able to contract for a less price. We leave it to you to settle this to the best advantage of the Company.

The military stores embarked for the service of this expedition, according to the enclosed lists, are under the charge of the re-

[1] Compensation for depreciation of money or for extra expenditure, as, *e.g.*, when serving in a foreign country.

[2] The Madras *fanam* was worth about twopence.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

spective officers, who are accountable to you. You will give them orders to be particularly careful that none are lost or damaged, and cause very exact monthly accounts to be delivered you of the receipts and issues. You are to give copies of the lists of stores to the Committee at Bengal.

On the ships *Marlborough* and *Walpole* we have laden Arcot rupees 400,000 (two *lacks* on each ship) consigned to you for the service of the expedition. Out of this you are to make such issues to the paymaster as you shall see necessary, and in case you should have occasion for a further supply, you are to apply to the President and Council there, and if they should not be able to furnish you, you have liberty to draw upon us.

You are to cause a general muster to be made monthly by the commissary of all the forces, *lascars*, artificers, *cooleys* and others in the Company's pay. We desire you will be present at these musters as often as your business will permit, and when you cannot be present yourself, depute such person as you shall think proper. These musters should be taken as near as possible to the end of every month, because they are to be a guide to the paymaster for his issues of pay, and the commissary is to transmit copies of the muster rolls to us by the most secure opportunities that offer.

We deliver you herewith a letter from the President to the Nabob of Bengal, and a letter from Salabut Jung to the same Nabob, both which you are to transmit to him at such time as you shall judge most proper. Enclosed are likewise translations of the two letters for your perusal.

We deliver you likewise a copy attested by the *Caugee*[1] of Delly of the *Mogul's phirmaund* to the Company for the possession of their several Settlements, and a book containing a translation not only of the *phirmaund*, but also of the orders sent from Delly at the same time to the officers of the several *subahs*, enjoining them to put the Company in possession and permit them to enjoy the priviledges granted by the said *phirmaund*. By this book you will be particularly informed what the Company have a right to pretend to in the province of Bengal, which will be a great assistance in your negociations with the Nabob. When you return to the

[1] The Muhammadan Judge.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Coast you are to leave both the Persian copy and the book of translations in the hands of the Select Committee at Bengal.

We enclose Colonel Adlercron's warrant, empowering you, or the commander-in-chief of the expedition for the time being, to appoint courts martial and persons to officiate as Judge Advocate. With our wishes for your success we are, &c. &c., GEORGE PIGOT, STRINGER LAWRENCE, HENRY POWNEY, ROBERT ORME, WILLIAM PERCEVAL, ROBERT PALK.

102.—*Letter from the Council at Fulta to the Council, Fort Saint George, dated* 13 *October*, 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—The accompanying duplicate under date the 17th ultimo was intended to be forwarded by the ship *Fame*, but that ship not proceeding or any other sea conveyance bound now to the Choromandel Coast we forward the same by *pattamar*, and are not a little concerned that to this date we have not been favoured with any advices from your Honor &c. Council. Our situation becomes very irksome, and since our last the sickness has continued among our military who are daily dying. The Moors likewise being convinced that the season is too far advanced for our proceeding out of the river (which we before endeavoured to make them believe was our intention), have begun again to hinder us in the procurement of fresh provisions, which if continued will greatly add to our present bad situation.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, WLILIAM WATTS, JAMES KILLPATRICK, RICHARD BECHER, PAUL RICHARD PEARKES, M. COLLET, W. MACKETT, P. AMYATT.

103. *Extracts from a letter from the Select Committee, Fort Saint George, to the Select Committee, Fort William*, 13 *October*, 1756.[1]

GENTLEMEN,—1. The Secret Committee of the Honourable the East India Company in their letter to us dated 13th February, having advised us that they have appointed you (with Colonel Lawrence when present) to be a Select Committee with powers to take such measures as shall be necessary for the protection and preservation of the Company's estate, rights and privileges, and

[1] Received at Fulta, December 14, 1756.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

having directed us, the Committee for the affairs of this Presidency, to correspond with you on all matters relative thereto: It is therefore to you, gentlemen, that we address the advice we have to offer on the subject of the late calamity that has befallen the Company's Settlements and estate in the province of Bengal, with an information of the efforts we have made for the re-establishment of the Company's possessions and the re-imbursement of the loss of property they have sustained.

2. We are to acknowledge the receipt of the following letters:

From Roger Drake Esq. and the Gentlemen of the Council at Fulta dated 18th August.

From Roger Drake Esq. Messrs. Watts, Killpatrick and Holwell at Fulta the 19th do.

From Mr. Holwell dated at Muxadavad the 17th July 1756.

From Mr. Holwell dated at Hughley 3rd August 1756.

From Messrs. Watts and Collet dated 2nd, 6th, 7th and 18th July last enclosing a letter for the Court of Directors.

From Mr. Becher &c. Council at Dacca dated 13th July.

3. Of all which copies will be transmitted to our Honourable Masters.

4. By letter from the President and Council of Madras to Mr. Drake and the Gentlemen of the Council at Fulta dated 18th and 21st September, which was dispatched by the *King's Fisher* sloop, you were advised of the disposition that had been made for the departure of the whole of His Majesty's squadron and a large part of our troops under the command of Colonel Clive, for the execution of the service before mentioned.

5. Accordingly Vice-Admiral Watson with His Majesty's ships *Kent, Cumberland, Tiger* (sic) *Salisbury* and *Bridgewater*, with the Company's ships *Walpole* and *Marlborough* now sail for Ballasore Road and we have embarked, all officers included, 528 military and 109 Train and 940 *sepoys*, under the command of Robert Clive, Esq., who has His Majesty's commission as Lieutenant-Colonel.

6. It is our duty to represent to you that we think Mr. Watson should be present, and assist in all your Councils and deliberations held on the subject of war you shall carry on, or the treaties which you shall make with the Nabob. You will find in this gentleman, as we always have, the greatest disinterestedness as well as zeal

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and willingness to promote the welfare of the East India Company.

7. Mr. Pocock likewise always assisted with Mr. Watson at our Councils and will at your request, we are persuaded, as readily assist at yours.

8. As Colonel Clive's rank in the Company's service is Deputy-Governor of Fort Saint David and to succeed to the Presidency of Fort Saint George, we doubt not but you will show him all the respect that rank entitles him to, and as his assistance in your Councils will be particularly useful, you will think it proper to offer him a seat at your Board. During his stay at Bombay he took the right hand of the President.

9. We could not have resolved to engage our Honourable Masters in the vast expense of fitting out this armament but with the hopes of obtaining equivalent advantages. The mere retaking of Calcutta should we think by no means be the end of this undertaking; not only their Settlements and factories should be restored but all their priviledges established in the full extent granted by the *Great Mogul*, and ample reparation made to them for the loss they have lately sustained; otherwise we are of opinion it would have been better nothing had been attempted, than to have added the heavy charge of this armament to their former loss, without securing their colonies and trade from future insults and exactions.

10. Should the Nabob on the news of the arrival of these forces, make offers tending to the acquiring to the Company the before mentioned advantages, rather than risque the success of a war, we think that sentiments of revenging injuries, although they were never more just, should give place to the necessity of sparing as far as possible the many bad consequences of war, besides the expence of the Company's treasures, but we are of opinion that the sword should go hand in hand with the pen, and that on the arrival of the present armament, hostilities should immediately commence with the utmost vigour. These hostilities must be of every kind which can either distress his dominions and estate or bring reprizals into our possession.

11. We need not represent to you the great advantage which we think it will be to the military operations, and the influence it

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

will have in the Nabob's councils to effect a junction with any Powers in the provinces of Bengal that may be dissatisfied with the violences of the Nabob's Government; or that may have pretensions to the Nabobship.

12. And it is we think more immediately necessary at the opening of the military operations to request Mr. Watson to block up if possible all the passes of the river, through which the salt, rice, and other provisions are carried into the country, and to seize on all that shall come within the reach of the armament, consulting at the same time proper measures for supplying our own force with provisions.

13. We have directed Colonel Clive to apply to you, gentlemen, for a plan of such treaty as you would recommend to be made with the Nabob and also for a plan of such military operations by land, as you would recommend to be carried on against him, untill he shall consent to such terms as the treaty may be concluded on; and Colonel Clive will assist you with his advice in the forming these plans.

14. But as we have a particular dependence on Colonel Clive's ability for the management of this expedition, and as it is absolutely necessary that no division of opinion or other impediment should prevent its being carried into full and entire execution, our instructions to Colonel Clive will empower him to proceed to such military operations by land, as he shall judge to be most for the Company's interest, transmitting to us in a very explicit manner his reasons for any proceedings which may differ from your sentiments, which reasons shall be referred to the Court of Directors, and should we upon the news of a war with France find it necessary to recall him with a part of the troops, that he do immediately come away with such troops, leaving only as many as he shall think sufficient for the defence of Calcutta; as in that circumstance we must think the preservation of the Company's estate under our authority a concern of too much importance to be subjected to the risques which may be incurred by the want of those troops. We thought it indispensibly our duty to invest Colonel Clive with so large a power judging that the certain possessions of the Company on this Coast would in such a case require infinitely more our attention than the present circumstances of this enterprize.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

15. We have laden 400,000 rupees on the *Walpole* and *Marlborough*, each two *lack* consigned to Colonel Clive for the service of the expedition.

16. We have appointed Mr. John Walsh Paymaster of the Forces and Mr. Thomas Maunsell Commissary.

* * * * *

20. We have delivered Colonel Clive a letter from our President to the Nabob of Bengal and a letter from Salabat Jung to the same Nabob, of both which we now enclose translations for your perusal.

21. We have also delivered to Colonel Clive a copy (attested by the *Caugee* of Delly) of the *Mogul's phirmaund* to the Company for the possession of their several Settlements, and a book containing a translation not only of the *phirmaund* but also of the orders sent from Delly to the officers of the different *subahs* enjoining them to put the Company in possession and permit them to enjoy the priviledges granted by the said *phirmaund*. Colonel Clive is directed to leave both the Persian copy and the English translations with you when he returns to the Coast.

* * * * *

24. We cannot too much enforce to you the absolute necessity which appears to us that the houses and buildings of Calcutta from which an enemy can annoy the fort be immediately levelled, as otherwise we cannot conceive any method of preserving the fort from the same fate it has lately suffered.

We are &c. &c. GEORGE PIGOT, ROBERT CLIVE, STRINGER LAWRENCE, HENRY POWNEY, ROBERT ORME, WILLIAM PERCEVAL, ROBERT PALK.

104. *Letter from Mr. Pigot to the Nabob of Bengal, dated 14 October, 1756.*

I received the letter you was pleased to write me on the 30th of June, advising me that it was not your intention to remove the mercantile business of the English Company out of the *subah* of Bengal, and at the same time I received information that all the Company's factories in the said province with their effects,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

amounting to several *kerows* had been seized by your people, also the effects of all the merchants who resided in the said Settlements amounting to a great many *lacks* more, and I was further informed that *the greatest part of the merchants were killed by your people in a cruel and barbarous manner beyond what can be described in writing*. I must inform you that the English have above all other nations enriched your province by a most extensive trade and the importation of immense sums of ready money. The *Mogul* was so sensible of the many advantages of our settling in Bengal that he has given us by his *phirmaunds* his protection, together with many privileges and indulgences in all parts of his dominions, and these privileges and indulgences the English have enjoyed from that time to this, according to the intent of the royal *phirmaund*. Indeed in Bengal the *Subahs* did not comply with the royal *phirmaund* but out of thirty-two villages given us by the King suffered us to possess but three, and moreover have often on trifling pretences taken large sums of money from the Governors of Bengal. However as it was the intent of the English to live peaceably and only to follow their trade in your province, they submitted and made no disturbance. All that the *Subahs*, your predecessors, have done is nothing in comparison to what you have lately done. I should have been willing to have believed that the violence and cruelties exercised by your army against the English was without your knowledge, but I find you commanded your army in person and after killing and murdering our people took possession of the Fort. The great commander of the King of England's ships has not slept in peace since this news and is come down with many ships, and I have sent a great *Sardar*,[1] who will govern after me, by name Colonel Clive, with troops and land forces. Full satisfaction and restitution must be made for the losses we have sustained. You are wise: consider whether it is better to engage in a war that will never end or to do what is just and right in the sight of God: a great name is obtained by justice as well as by valour. You have heard that we have fought and always been victorious in these parts. The Nabob of this province writes you how much we have assisted in his affairs, and always acted in support of the orders of the King of

[1] Military Commander.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Delly. Salabad Jung asked our assistance but we determined to obtain satisfaction in Bengal. Mr. Clive will explain all things to you. What can I say more?[1]

105. *Translation of an extract from a letter from M. Barthelemy to M. de Moras, dated Pondicherry,* 16 *October,* 1756.[2]

After the death of Aliverdikhan his grandson Soujret Khan was recognised as his successor. He is a monster equally greedy of the blood and of the wealth of his dependants. The widow of the late Nawab, even during the life of her husband, sent the greater part of her wealth to Gougouta[3] under the charge of her *diwan*. The new Nawab, being informed of this, did not hesitate to demand its return from the English, and when they did not obey, he seized the Company's factory at Cossimbazar and drove out the Company's servants, retaining the Chief and three other councillors as prisoners. After this he wrote direct to the Governor of Calcutta that if he did not do what he wished he would destroy his factory also. The latter, indignant at this haughty behaviour, replied in angry terms, but the Nawab had advanced too far to be able to withdraw [his demand]. Accordingly he set out with about 30,000 men of whom only one-third were soldiers. Mr. Drake, Governor of Golgota, did not maintain his bravado when it came to action. Hardly had the Moors approached when he embarked on a vessel and retired to Fulta, with the Commandant of the troops, two hundred soldiers, some of the women, and all the wealth deposited by different people in the factory, which amounted to a prodigious sum. The fort, rendered helpless by this desertion, made only a feeble defence. The enemy made themselves masters of it on the third day, and committed all those dreadful acts which are common in a place taken by assault at the hands of an uncontrolled soldiery. The Nawab chose one hundred women and as many white children of both sexes whom he sent to Murshidabad.[4]

[1] Letters were sent at the same time to the Nawabs of Purneah, Dacca, and Cuttack, asking their assistance.

[2] Archives Coloniales, Paris.

[3] Calcutta.

[4] As far as is known, the Nawab set free all the prisoners he took of both sexes.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

106. *Letter from J. Z. Holwell to Council at Fulta, dated Fulta, 25 October, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—1. On a late perusal of your Fulta Consultations of the 14th July I find myself called upon (amongst others of the surviving members of the Council of War held in Calcutta the 18th of June last) to attest the assertion of Messrs. Manningham and Frankland touching their being ordered by that Council of War 'To embark the European women on board the *Dodaly* and *Diligence* with a detachment of 30 men to guard the said ships, with directions to move the *Dodaly* clear of the small craft with which she was encumbered and of the enemy's fire.' Most sorry I am, gentlemen, to find myself obliged to speak on a subject so very disagreeable to my memory, but the whole proceedings of that Council appearing to my conception of so extraordinary a nature joined to the consideration of my Minute and Dissent in Council the 20th August last[1] (against any allowance being made the owners of the *Dodaly* for her loss and damages) that I cannot remain silent without incurring my own censure as well as the imputation from you of much injustice in my Minute above referred to. Thus far I thought it necessary to apologize for giving you trouble at this juncture, and shall with your leave proceed to speak, with that strict regard which every gentleman owes to truth, not only to the particulars I am called on by those gentlemen to attest but to the whole proceedings of that Council of the 14th July, and consider the defence Messrs. Manningham and Frankland there make for depriving the Company's forts, effects and garrison of the succour of that ship, and then submit the justice of my said Minute and Dissent to the determination of yourselves and my Honourable Employers.

2. That the European women was ordered to be embarked by the Council of War of the 18th is true, but that Messrs. Manningham and Frankland should embark them was no part of the order. Those gentlemen tendered themselves for that service, to which none objected publickly though myself with many others thought their stations, both civil and military, were of such importance as might well have excused them from that service.

[1] See under date.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

3. That there was any particular order relative to the *Diligence* I do not remember and think I can truely attest the contrary. Mrs. Drake, Mrs. Mapletoft, Mrs. Coales and Mrs. Wedderburn with their familys being embarked on board that vessel was purely the result of my own advice to them, imagining the *Dodaly* would be extreamly crowded, and they had my order to be received on board, the ship being under my direction.

4. That a detachment of 30 men was ordered for the defence of those ships I do not remember and should certainly have objected to any such measure had it been proposed whilst I was in the Council of War as it certainly was both imprudent and needless. Imprudent as it would have been a considerable weakening a fatigued garrison who had barely a relief for duty, and needless whilst the ships remained under the cover of our fort.

5. That those gentlemen had directions to remove the *Dodaly* clear of the small craft with which she was encumbered and of the enemy's fire are assertions to me totally new, and I can truely attest was no part of the order of the Council of War, nor know I from what quarter such directions went, but if she really was encumbered with small craft, there would surely have been more propriety in moving them than her, or on supposition that propriety was attended to, yet surely whatever directions those gentlemen had, did not, nor could imply that they were to remove her low as Mr. Margass's house, a station where she was more exposed to the enemy's fire, had they taken the advantage, deprived of the benefit of our guns and small arms, and rendered useless as to the defence or succour of the Settlement, and contrary to Mr. Manningham's express promise to me that she should not stir from under the cover of the fort.

6. Touching the other part of the charge laid against those gentlemen by the Colony as a just objection to Mr. Manningham being sent to the Presidency of Fort Saint George, *viz.* that of their refusing joining the Councils when sent for, I can form no judgment further than I can collect from the defence of those gentlemen as entered in the Consultation of the 14th July, being a stranger to the nature of the orders the President sent by Captain Wedderburn and subsequently by Mr. Holme for their return to the fort. I was myself but just come in from the center battery when the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Council of War in the evening of [the] 18th was called,' and having been the preceding night and day exhausted with continued fatigue without rest or food, as soon as the Council of War broke up I retired in hopes of geting a little repose, not doubting but the resolution of it would have been strictly obeyed, which were that the European women, the Company's treasure, and I think their essential books and papers should be embarked that night on board the *Dodaly*, but whether this last was entered on the Minutes of that Council, I cannot be possitive, but perfectly recollect a discourse I had with Mr. Manningham on the propriety of it just as the Council broke up, and indeed I ever thought untill I joined your Councils here, that both the treasure and books had been embarked, and here I cannot omit remarking that better no reason at all had been given for the neglect of a measure of such importance to the Company than that which stands on the Consultation of the 20th August. But it is time I come to consider the pleas made use of by Messrs. Manningham and Frankland for their not returning to the Fort: which are that 'a little after one in the morning Mr. Lindsay came on board and informed them he left a General Assembly sitting, that the Captain of the artillery had reported there was not two days ammunition, that many of the military and militia were in liquor and mutinous, that it was the unanimous opinion the Fort was not tenable, that a retreat was resolved on, that Mr. Holwell was strenuous of its being made immediately and opposed by Mr. Baillie particularly, that the whole of the common people were in confusion, and that nothing was determined on.' Without, gentlemen, my entering particularly into the merit of these pleas, let us consider the weight of these gentlemen's seats in Council and their importance as bearing the names and authority of field officers, and Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel of the militia, and I think an impartial eye will at first sight pronounce that there was not one of the pleas urged by them in defence of their not returning into the fort, but should have urged their immediate rejoining our Councils, though they had no orders from the President for that purpose, in place of waiting on board for the detatchment and removing the *Dodaly* a second time that night as low as Govindpore, runing that ship and the ladies on board into ten times the risque from the enemy.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

They ought rather to have returned with the ship on the flood under our guns, to have favoured the embarkation of the Company's books and treasure, (which they knew were not on board) and the retreat of the garrison. Mr. Lindsay informed them the Council was siting, that our councils were divided, and that when he left the fort all was in confusion, and nothing determined on, which was true, the Council not breaking up untill near four in the morning, without any thing being resolved on, but defering the retreat without, in my judgment, a single reason being urged in defence of it. The presence, weight and authority of those gentlemen might have made our councils unanimous, or have given a happy majority for a general retreat, have prevented the unhappy defection of the President, the officers and part of the garrison the next morning, and have been the cause of saving the publick and private property lodged in the fort as well as the lives of many who fell a miserable sacrifice by our retreat being cut off, the primary cause of which I must still attribute to the retreat of the ship to Mr. Margass's house and Govindpore on the night of the 18th without order or the knowledge of any one in the garrison. It was urged I know and asserted by Mr. Frankland in Council the 20th August when I entered my Minute and Dissent to the payment of the *Dodaly's* loss and damages, that those gentlemen had orders for moving the ship down, and I beg leave to remind you that I asked the President touching this assertion, who in your presence declared, he neither gave such orders nor knew of any such being given—therefore on the whole I hope I stand vindicated in your judgment for such my Dissent, as it is to me not a little astonishing how the gentlemen composing that Council of the 14th July could unanimously on the defence before them pronounce it as their opinion, that those gentlemen had cleared themselves of the charge laid against them in that letter signed as I am informed by the greatest part of the Colony.

I am &c. &c., J. Z. HOLWELL.

107. *Extract from Fulta Consultations, 25 October, 1756, in Fulta River.*

'We in consequence of such power and authority granted to us by His Majesty's most gracious Charter do now declare and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

nominate Bulramgurry (one of our former subordinate factories) to be the seat of our Presidency or principal Settlement for the Honourable Company in Bengal &c.

'Ordered such our Declaration be made Publick.'

108. *Letter from W. Tooke to Council at Fulta, dated off Fulta,* 10 *November,* 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRS,—Having observed an advertisement[1] affixed in several parts about Fulta, wherein the honourable President and Governour, (by approbation of this honourable Board) requests every one to send to him, or to any of its honourable members, to be delivered in Council, their sentiments in writing founded on truth, in what they think him blameable concerning the unfortunate loss of Calcutta; as the honourable Board cannot but be extremely sensible how dependant every junior servant is unfortunately obliged to be to the gentlemen of Council, more especially as all posts and little perquisites under them are more commonly distributed by interest than otherwise, how disagreeable a task it must be to any junior servant in such a case, to be obliged to accuse any such gentleman while in power, of ill conduct, I must submit to your superior judgements: for my part as I have always as yet made it my study and application to merit your good will and approbation, humbly request my being excused acting otherwise, till such time as our honourable Masters' pleasure is known on the occasion; when if they think proper to call any one's conduct in question, their directions will be a sufficient sanction then, to those that choose to accuse, whereas if they judge every one to have done their duty, there will be no need of accusations.

I am with the profoundest respect, &c. &c., WILLIAM TOOKE.

109. *Narrative of the Capture of Calcutta from* 10 *April,* 1756, *to* 10 *November,* 1756, *by William Tooke.*[2]

April 10*th,* 1756.—Alliverdi Khawn Nabob of this province departed this life aged 82 years, having governed 17 years; which

[1] Advertisement, dated ship *Fort William*, off Fulta, 31 October, 1756 (see Drake's letter to Council, 17-25 January, 1757).

[2] Orme MSS. O. V., 19, Bengal, 1756, pp. 5-46; also India, IV., pp. 885-942, where it is styled: 'Narrative of the loss of Calcutta, by William Tooke, a most satirical

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Government he acquired by cutting off Suffech Khawn. Sometime before his death he appointed Seir Raja Dowlet his presumptive heir and adopted son; (as he had no sons of his own) who on his death, accordingly, took possession of his effects &c.; but Gauzeetee daughter to Alliverdi Khawn, and widow to Narwages Mahmud Khawn deceased, having under her care and tuition Morada Dowlet a minor, and son to Pachaculi Khawn also deceased; resolved to put up for the Nabobship in his behalf, being prompted to it, as is supposed, by her galant Nirza Alli; as likewise by the extraordinary ill character Seir Raja Dowlet bore among his people, being given up to all manner of luxury and debauchery; and as she was possessed of immense riches, got 20,000 of the military over to her party, with which she entrenched herself at Moota Geel, near Muxadavad, at the Chutah Nabob's[1] palace; and took care to be well supplyed with all sorts of arms and ammunition; but in want of provisions, the Nabob having secured all the avenues leading to her camp, whereupon, many of her military, upon her refusing them to attack the Nabob's forces, deserted her; and her husband's friends interposing between her and Seir Raja Dowlet, she suffered herself to be imposed on, and compromised matters; which was no sooner done, but Seir Raja Dowlet took her forces in pay, and having her then entirely at his discretion, plundered her of all her riches, to put it out of her power to make head against him hereafter, he then banished Nirza Alli her galant and several others of her servants which he judged were not his well-wishers; upon which Radabullub her *duan*, either out of fear, or otherwise, pretended to go a pilgrimage to Jaggernaut, at Ballasore, and under that pretence, applyed to Mr. Watts, Chief of Cossimbuzar, to write Mr. Drake, to permit his son Kissendasseat, with his family and effects (judged to be 53 *laacks* in treasure and jewells only) to reside in Calcutta; and that he would grant him protection during his absence, which was no sooner asked than

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performance.' In the Index it is styled: 'A satirical narrative of the loss of Calcutta, by Mr. Tooke, June, 1756, with several other original pieces.' A copy of this, without the author's name, is to be found in the British Museum, Add. MS. No. 29,209, Vol. I., fols. 1-31.

[1] Nawajis Muhammad Khan.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

assented to. Seir Raja Dowlet having settled affairs, and having nothing more to fear from the *Begum;* collected his forces together, and marched to Rajamull, in order to bring the Nabob of Purnea to subjection, named Sucajunk, (son to Site Mahmud Khawn) who thought he had some pretensions to the Nabobship, as it afterwards appeared he had, by a *phirmaund* he received from the *Mogul*, (for it is to be observed Alliverdi Khawn usurped the Nabobship, and kept it only by force), but Seir Raja Dowlet's quick march prevented Sucajunk raising an army sufficient to make head; accordingly for the present chose rather to submit and pay homage with such a sum of money as was demanded of him, and to wait a more convenient opportunity of claiming his right. While all this was transacting at Rajamull, Seir Raja Dowlet wrote his prime minister Huckembeg to demand Kissendasseat of the English, as he had acted as *duan* to his father Radabullub, while *Subah* of Dacca, during Alliverdi Khawn's time, and neither of them had given any account of their administration for many years; though they had the charge of one of the greatest provinces in the Nabobship, and upon our refusing to comply with this demand and some others he made afterwards, and treating the messengers he sent to Calcutta with the greatest ignominy, and ill language, he immediately quitted Rajumull, and on Monday 24th May 1756 in the afternoon, Aumebeg a *jemindar*, with his forces, about 300 horse, came to Cossimbuzar, by order of the Nabob.

25th May, 200 horse, and some *burgundosses*, reinforced him in the morning; and in the evening was joined with two elephants, and another body of forces; when he endeavoured to force his way in at the factory gate, but was prevented by the serjeant of the guards, calling the soldiers to arms, who fixing their bayonets kept the gateway. The *jemindar* finding he could not get in by surprize, told them he was not come to fight; during which, the Chief did his utmost to provide a quantity of provisions and water, notwithstanding he met with frequent obstructions, and, upon more forces advancing orders were given to load all the great guns with grape and round shot, and to keep a good look out the whole night.

27th May, the drums and 8 o'clock gun silenced, and the gate

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

kept shutt, which before was always kept open the whole day. And upon the enemy's forces daily increasing, Dr. Forth was sent to the *jemindar* to know the Nabob's intentions, which he informed him was to attack the factory unless Mr. Watts went to him and signed such articles as he required. The *mounsee*, or Persean interpreter, brought Mr. Watts the same intelligence. At this time all provisions and water were entirely stopt, of which, there was a great want, particularly of the former, as there was a great number of women, children, slaves and unnecessary persons in the factory. Our complement of men consisted of 25 Europeans and as many black soldiers, with a few *lascars*, Messrs. William Watts, Collet and Batson of Councill, and Messrs. Sykes, H. Watts, and Chambers, writers; Lieutenant Elliot commanded the artillery, as likewise the military, having his son under him a volunteer. As it was apprehended the Nabob had no other intent than what the former Nabobs had had, *viz.* to stop the Company's business till his demands were complyed with by extorting a sum of money, letters were addressed him, wrote in the most submissive terms, to desire to know in what particulars the English had given him offence; but no other reply was sent, than that they must pull down their fortifications newly built at Perrins and the Octagon summer house of Mr. Kelsall's; (which he had also took for a fortification, by a parcel of shells having been proved there from time to time, both places adjoining and within a league of Calcutta). By this time there was near 50,000 men round the factory, and 70 or 80 pieces of cannon planted against it, on the opposite side the river, but not near enough to do any execution.

June 1st, Radabullub[1] came to speak with Mr. Watts, and brought with him three *jemindars*, who all advised him to go to the Nabob himself, and that everything might be very easily accommodated; upon which he was weak enough to inform them that if the Nabob would send him a *beetle*, as a token for his safety and security, he would very willingly and with pleasure wait on him. Whereupon, Radabullub took leave and went away, and soon after brought him a *beetle*, on a silver dish, from the Nabob; (at least as he informed him) and in the evening 2nd June

[1] Mr. Tooke confuses this person with Rai Durlabh, the Nawab's General.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Mr. Watts and Dr. Forth went to the Nabob, in company with Huckembeg's son, though the military for a long time endeavoured to persuade him to the contrary, nay even refused to let him go out of the factory. Upon Mr. Watts's going before the Nabob, with his hands across and a handkerchief wrapt round his wrists, signifying himself his slave and prisoner (this he was perswaded to do by Huckembeg, Radabullub, and others, who assured him it might be a means of pacifying the Nabob, his appearing before him in an abject submissive manner), he abused him very much and ordered him to be taken out of his sight, but Huckembeg's son telling the Nabob he was a good sort of a man, and intended on hearing of his arrival from Rajamull to have come and embraced his footsteps (*Hat bandky Sahebka kuddum puckkerna*), upon which he ordered him to Huckembeg's tent, where he signed a *mulchilca* and was made to send for Messrs. Collet and Batson, for the same purpose, but on their arrival they were all three confined. The purport of the *mulchilca* was nearly as follows *viz.* For to destroy the redoubt, &c., newly built at Perrins near Calcutta, to deliver up any of his subjects that should fly to us for protection, (to evade justice) on his demanding such subject, to give an account of the *dusticks* for several years past, and to pay a sum of money that should be agreed on, for the bad use made of them, to the great prejudice of his revenues, and lastly to put a stop to the *Zemindar*'s extensive power, to the great prejudice of his subjects also.

The 4th June, Mr. Collet was sent back to Cossimbuzar, to deliver up the factory to the Nabob; which was punctually put in execution, with all the guns, arms and ammunition, notwithstanding the soldiers were against it, and congratulated his return with the respect due only to a Chief, by drawing up in two lines for him to pass through.

June 5th, Mr. Batson was sent back to Cossimbuzar and Mr. Collet demanded, when Mr. Watts and he were informed they must get ready to go with the Nabob to Calcutta. This morning upon opening the factory gates, the enemy immediately entered in great numbers, and demanded the keys of the *godowns*, both publick and private. They no sooner took possession of the arms and ammunition, but they behaved in a most insolent manner,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

threatening the gentlemen to cut off their ears, slit their noses and *chabuck*[1] them, with other punishments, in order to extort confession and compliance from them. This behaviour of theirs lasted till the 8th when Lieutenant Elliot having secreted a pair of pistolls, shott himself through the head. The gentlemen's surprize was so great that they immediately sent and informed the *dewan* of what had past, thinking by that means to procure themselves better treatment. He was then searching and examining the soldiers boxes and chests in order to return to them their cloaths and apparell, but on hearing this news he ordered all the Europeans out of the factory, and put them under a strong guard, at Mr. Collet's house, where they all remained that night, except Messrs. Sykes and Batson who happily found means to make their escape and get to the French factory.

The 9th, all the prisoners were sent to Muxadavad *Cutcherry*, and put in irons, where they remained, except after 15 days confinement Messrs. H. Watts and Chambers were permitted to go to either the French or Dutch factorys, provided those gentlemen would give a receipt for them, and be responsible for their appearance, when demanded by the Nabob.

The 10th July the military were set at liberty; as for the two gentlemen[2] who were sent to the *aurungs*, from Cossimbuzar, they were also released about the same time, but plundered as those at the factory were, of everything they had. The factory is situated close to the river side, and consists of four bastions, mounting each ten guns (nine and six pounders) also two eighteen pounders to defend the gate-way, and a Line of 22 guns (most field pieces) towards the water side. Some time before Cossimbuzar was attacked (but preparations only making for it) Mr. Watts acquainted the Governor and Council, that he was told from the *Durbar*, by order of the Nabob, that he had great reason to be dissatisfyed with the late conduct of the English in general, besides he had heard they were building new fortifications near Calcutta, without ever applying to him, or consulting him about it, which he by no means approved of, for he looked upon us only as a sett of merchants, and therefore if we chose to reside in his dominions under that denomination we were extremely wellcome, but as

[1] To whip or flog.

[2] Messrs. Hastings and Marriott.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Prince of the country, he forthwith insisted on the demolition of all those new buildings we had made. The Nabob at the same time sent to the President and Councill Fuckeer Tougar,[1] with a message much to the same purport; which as they did not intend to comply with, looking upon it as a most unprecedented demand, treated the messenger with a great deal of ignominy and turned him out of their bounds, without any answer at all; upon which a second messenger was sent to Mr. Drake, to this effect, that unless upon receipt of that order he did not immediately begin and pull down those fortifications, he would come down himself and throw them in the river. This messenger was treated as ridiculously as the other, and an answer sent agreable thereto, as likewise by a messenger that was sent some time before, to demand the delivery up of Kissendasseat. In the meantime we received intelligence that Cossimbuzar Factory was surrounded with a large body of forces, and a great quantity of cannon, but the Council were determined not to submit to the terms proposed; accordingly directed the Chief at Cossimbuzar to make the best defence he could, and promised him succours as soon as the season would admit of it.

The 7th June, advice early in the morning was received at Calcutta, of the loss of Cossimbuzar Factory, and that the Nabob was upon full march with all his forces for Fort William. The same day orders were sent to the Chiefs of Dacca, Jugdea and Ballasore, to withdraw and quit their factorys with what effects they could secure, and the Governor by beat of drum, caused all the inhabitants of Calcutta, fit to bear arms, to be assembled; in order to form a body of militia, which was accordingly done the same evening, and the next morning being the 8th June, two companys of militia were formed, one under the command of Captain John Zephaniah Holwell, and the other under Captain William Mackett; and the following gentlemen were appointed officers under them, *viz.* Robert Mapletoft, Captain Lieutenant, Richard Court, H. Wedderburn, T. Holmes, and William Sumner, Lieutenants, C. Douglas, T. Coales and R. H. Baldrick, Ensigns; and William Dumbleton Adjutant.

June 11th, the whole body of troops the town was able to

[1] Coja Wajid.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

furnish fit to bear arms, including the whole military and militia was 475 (Europeans and *topasses*); the number of Europeans being 235 (about 23 of which were afterwards obliged to attend the shipping they belonged to) were assembled on a green to the southward of the factory, and after being divided into four divisions, were cantoned as follows; Captain David Clayton with 149 military and militia (including officers and twelve *lascars*) was directed to take post at the Court House; Captain John Buchannan with an equal number of forces, took post at a house just without the Fossée, that runs to the southward of the town, known by the name of Mr. Burrow's house, near the powder magazine, and Lieutenant Peter Smyth, marched with the third division and was stationed with 80 men at the salt-petre *godowns;* Captain Alexander Grant was appointed Adjutant General; Charles Manningham Colonel of the militia, and William Frankland Lieutenant Colonel. The Armenians, a party the least confidence was reposed in, made the fourth division and marched to the factory, under command of Ensign John Bellamy, where Captain Commandant Minchin was also. In the mean time Messrs. Simpson and O'Hara, engineers, with a great number of *cooleys*, were employed throwing up a breastwork seven foot high and six wide, with a ditch twelve foot deep and nine wide, at the salt-petre *godowns;* another at the Court House, and another to the southward, a little without the Fossée; which being completely effected, without the least molestation were each of them supplied with two six pounders, and also with two field pieces (six pounders) and *chevaux de frizes*, and with a quantity of crows feet, &c., &c. to strew on the grand roads where it was judged the attack would be made. All the narrow passes leading to the town, were also furnished with a ditch and breastwork, but not supplyed with cannon, and intrenchments were begun to be thrown up across the Park, with a ravelin to defend the front gate of the factory, but had no time to finish them.

The 10th in the afternoon 47 persons detached themselves from the militia, and entered volunteers among the military, to remain so during the troubles; 34 of whom where Company's servants.

June 13th, there was an order issued out to stop all Moors boats, and an order given to take two Moors ships lying a little way down the river, being just arrived, which was accordingly executed, and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the *Prince George*,[1] a ship belonging to [the] Madrass Establishment, in company with the *Dodley*,[2] the *Lively*[3] ketch, and *Neptune*[4] snow, which were taken in the Company's service (as many other vessels were) were sent to Mucka Tanna, to demolish the fortifications there. About noon they sett sail, and in the evening landed what men they had, who entered the fort without opposition, and spiked seven guns they found there; six of which they threw in the river, but the 14th about eleven o'clock in the morning the enemy, about 3 or 4,000, advanced with great precipitation to the fort, which obliged what men we had landed to take to their boats; the enemy took immediate possession of the fort, and fired very smartly with their small arms from the parapets, as also from two field pieces they had planted behind some bushes to the northward of the fort, about 150 paces. The shipping returned the fire of the enemy the whole day, and in the evening dropt away with the ebb having done no visible execution. In this attack Captain Best of the *Lively* ketch received a wound across his belly with a shott, and one *lascar* was killed on board the *Dodley*.

The next day being the 15th Lieutenant Bishop was detached with 30 men, to reinforce the shipping, in order to drive the enemy from Mucka Tanna, upon which they were directed again to their stations under command of Captain David Rannie, who was appointed Commodore in this expedition; but whatever were the reasons the military returned the next day, without either they or the ships, making the least attempt against the enemy, indeed, 5 or 6 shot were fired by them, which were returned; in the evening the ships were ordered to return also.

June 16th, advice was received early in the morning that the Nabob's forces had crossed the river a little above Hughley, and some at Chandernagore, and that they marched with surprizing expedition. About half past eleven the same day, the enemy appeared in great numbers at Chitpoor, and their cannon arriving soon after, they began to fire briskly on the *Fortune*[5] ketch and *Chance*[6] sloop (that had been sent up the river to assist the garrison of the redoubt at Perrins wherein was Francis Piccard Ensign and 35 men) from a seven gun battery, one of which was an

[1] Captain Hague. [2] Captain Young. [3] Captain Best.
[4] Captain Austen. [5] Captain Campbell. [6] Captain Champion.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

18 pounder, the rest 6 pounders; however the vessels by keeping a quick fire maintained their stations; upon which the enemy turned their whole force upon the redoubt and accordingly brought up their cannon on elephants to the edge of a small wood, to the northward of the fossée. They then attempted several times to force a passage over the fossée under the fire of their cannon and small arms; but our little troop keeping a constant platoon fire on them, as likewise by playing smartly two three pounders which they had there, and being reinforced with a detachment of 50 men under command of Lieutenant Blagg, and the piquet under command of Captain Clayton advancing at about half past six, the enemy thought proper to retire. They must have sustained a considerable loss in this attack, for seventy nine of their dead were found the hext morning, most of them killed with cannon shott at the corner of the wood where they had brought up their artillery. The enemy had no sooner quitted this attack, but they directly drew off their artillery and filed off in very large columns towards Dumdum plains. In this action we lost Mr. Thorsbey of the volunteers, six more men were also killed and 5 wounded. In the night the enemy having passed the old intrenchment at Cow Cross; at Metres, and Omichund's Gardens (though we had 1,000 *peons* and *bucksereys* to defend the bridge at Cow Cross, who upon seeing the enemy, joined them), entered the skirts of the town plundering and burning all they mett in their way especially the black merchants' houses. We had also intelligence of their having burned in their march all about Barrasut, Dumdum and Baranagore.

June 17th we caused all the *buzars* and *cajan*[1] houses to the eastward to be burnt, as likewise to the southward, almost as far as Govinpoors where many of our people being detected plundering were instantly punished with dicapitation. About four in the afternoon a party of *bucksereys* under command of Narransing took a *jemindar* of the enemy's whom they brought to Captain Clayton's battery. Upon examination, he informed us that the enemy's number did not exceed 8,000 men, and intended to attack the batterys next day. In the meantime they had set fire to the *Great Buzar* and the adjacent places, as well as to many parts of the

[1] Thatched with palm leaf.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Black Town, which burnt till morning, and being so very extensive and near, formed a scene too horrible for language to describe. The enemy that day, and the night before, were encampt behind the brick kilns, and stretched from the bungalow[1] as far as Govinderam Metre's Garden on the Dumdum road, as we were informed by our spyes we sent to their camp.

June the 18th in the morning early Lieutenant Smyth finding the enemy close to his post, detached Ensign Walcott with fifty men and a field piece, to hinder them from plundering the houses and to drive them to a greater distance, accordingly upon his advancing about 200 paces, forced the enemy from the houses they were possessed of, and obliged them to retire to a considerable distance with some loss, though without the loss of a single man on our side. The same morning orders were issued out that no quarter was to be given to the enemy, the prison being but a very small place was full, and among other prisoners was Omichund who submitted himself to be taken the day before with a guard, without resistance, but Huzzaromull, his relation, acted otherwise, by which means he lost his right hand which was cut off in taking him close by the wrist with a scimetar; several of his *peons* were also killed and wounded in the skirmish, as also some of his women. Kissendasseat also stood on his defence, for upon sending a party of *peons* to fetch him, he bravely defended himself, drove them away, and took some of them prisoners, whom he treated very barbarously; however Lieutenant Blagg was detached with thirty men, who took him and all his arms; which was a very large quantity. In the meantime Monsieur Labaume, who was sent with seventeen men from Captain Clayton's battery to defend the Jail, was very briskly attacked by the enemy, who advanced on him through all the back lanes, and having possessed themselves of all the houses round about kept a very quick and smart fire; as likewise from behind every place they could find a shelter, upon which about 8 o'clock in the morning Captain Clayton detached Ensign Castairs (who had that day received a commission) with a corporal, six volunteers, and two field pieces to reinforce them at the Jail; posted a serjeant and six men at the top of Lady Russell's house, and a serjeant and 16 men at the

[1] Probably refers to the 'Bread and Cheese Bungalow.'

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

top of Mr. Lascell's house at the end of the Rope Walk, and as the enemy drew near on all sides in very great numbers Captain Buchannan detached Ensign Scott with a field piece and 20 men to defend the road and breastwork thrown up at the ditch at the end of the burying ground, a serjeant and 16 men to defend a breastwork thrown up at Mrs. Putham's house, and Lieutenant Blagg with ten volunteers to be posted at the top of Captain Minchin's house to flank the forementioned breastwork, where it was judged the enemy would make their attack. At the same time Lieutenant Smyth posted Mr. Sumner with a small party at Mr. Court's house, and likewise another small party at Captain John Coales's house. By the time all this was perfected it was near 10 o'clock when the enemy began to fire upon us exceeding warm from all quarters, but more especially at Monsieur Labaume's, and Captain Clayton's posts; in so much that by 3 o'clock Monsieur Labaume was drove from his post with the loss of his cannon (which were left spiked) and most of his men killed or wounded. About one o'clock the enemy fired so very hot upon us, particularly the attack was so smart at the eastern battery, that Captain Clayton recalled all his out partys and was reinforced with an eighteen pounder to endeavour to demolish the houses round about, but all their efforts proving ineffectual, and the fire of the enemy still growing hotter, about 5 o'clock Captain Clayton quitted his battery with much confusion, leaving his ammunition behind him, and also all his cannon spiked, except one field piece which was carryed off. His battery was within a musket shott of the factory's front gate, and consequently the loss of it of the utmost ill consequence. Upon quitting his battery he was directed to post himself in the church with half of his men, and Lieutenant Bishop and the other half to take possession of Mr. Eyre's house, which being done, orders were sent to Lieutenant Smyth to quit his battery and take post at Mr. Cruttenden's house, which he did with good order without the loss of a gun or ammunition, his out partys having been called in a little time before. Captain Buchannan imagining he should be attacked in front from the great road leading to Sirman's Garden, called in Ensign Scott with his party to his assistance, which he had no sooner done but he received directions to quit the outer battery

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

(though he had at that time but one man killed) and take charge of the inner one, close by the front park gate, which after he had effected, he received fresh orders to quit immediately though it was within pistol shott of the factory and intirely commanded two of the three grand roads leading to the garrison. While this was transacting Lieutenant Blagg and the volunteers under his command posted at the top of Captain Minchin's house were but in an indifferent situation, for about 3 o'clock in the afternoon Captain Clayton withdrew the serjeant and 16 men who defended the next house to them, and soon after the serjeant and sixteen men, who defended the breastwork at Mrs. Putham's, basely running away (on one of his men's being killed) left them greatly exposed to the enemy, who immediately took possession of all the houses round about, nay even of that house itself, and barricaded the doors up to the very top of the house, which passage to the top being very narrow they did not dare to attempt; in which situation they continued till near seven o'clock, received the fire of the enemy from every part, as likewise were in no small danger from our own guns at the factory, who were at that time playing very smartly on the enemy at that quarter; when, all their ammunition being expended, obliged them to take a resolution to force open the doors, and fight their way through with their bayonets, especially as by that time all the batterys were withdrawn and but one attempt made to relieve them, which party was repulsed by the enemy; so looking upon themselves as a forlorn hope were willing to extricate themselves the best they could. Accordingly the door was burst open, and upon endeavouring to retreat to a lane at the back of the house leading to the Rope Walk in hopes to get under shelter of our own guns, found the enemy so numerous as rendered that passage impracticable, and here Messrs. Smith and Wilkinson, two of the party, having imprudently advanced a little too far, were cut to pieces, though the first killed 4 or 5 of the enemy before he fell; the remainder by making good use of their bayonets (not having a single charge left) gained the front gate of the house. By this time the enemy were possessed of the whole square, so were obliged to pass through all their fire, till they gained a field piece that was placed at the end of the park wall to cover Captain Buchannan's retreat,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

which playing upon the enemy drove them to a greater distance. The number of Moors killed by that party is almost incredible. The enemy acknowledge 173 killed, besides wounded, but the number was judged much greater as every shott must have taken place, the enemy being in such swarms, besides what were killed by bayonets in forcing a passage through them. Those of the volunteers who remained were Messrs. Ellis, Tooke, Parker, Knapton, Law, Dodd, Drake, and McPherson, commanded by Lieutenant Blagg. Upon Captain Buchannan's being ordered to quit the inner battery he was directed to post a Lieutenant and 30 men at the Company's House, and to march the rest into the factory, which he did having made a very fine retreat by securing all his ammunition and without the loss of a gun except an 18 pounder which was sent to the inner battery, and upon his being ordered away so abruptly he left it spiked up. Those stationed at the Company's house two or three hours after were ordered into the factory also, not having sufficient there to defend the garrison in case of an attack. The same evening boats were sent to Ensign Piccard at the redoubt at Perrins to come away with his party, and take post at the Company's House. By the time all this was effected and the different posts secured it was about 7 o'clock. At our retreat from the batterys there was a general consternation in the factory, particularly among the women and others, for there could not be less than 3,000 slaves and unnecessary people of no consequence in the garrison; when it was judged proper to put all the ladies on board the shipping. Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, our Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel of the militia, preferred entering the list among the number of women rather than defend the Company's and their own property, accordingly went off with them, and, though several messages were sent them to attend Councill if they did not choose to fight, still no persuasions could avail. Messrs. Holmes, Sumner and Wedderburn Lieutenants of the militia went on board the shipping also the same night and never returned, as did likewise Ensign Baldrick with a few persons more. Little or nothing was done this night by the enemy, except their throwing a few fire arrows into the factory, which did no damage, they being employed plundering the houses they had gott possession of, and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

filling up the trenches and ditches (we had made) in order to bring up their artillery, for as yet they had only fired a few random shotts from a field piece having no battery erected. About 8 o'clock in the evening a council of war was held, whereat were present Mr. Drake and his Council that remained, all the military officers, and some of the principal inhabitants of the town; when it was debated what were the safest steps to be taken in the present exigency of affairs; when the first enquiry made was from the Captain of the Artillery, Lawrence Witherington, for the quantity of ammunition there was in the garrison, who reported that at the rate it had been expended there was sufficient for about two days more at furthest, but if husbanded a little, might be made to serve for three. Thereupon a retreat was considered of, and proposed by Mr. Holwell to be made the next day or next night, and that it might be done in a safe and calm manner, and the interval employed in sending the Company's papers, treasure, &c., on board the different shipping they had taken up, and that the same might in due time also be made publick to every one; but this was rejected at about 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning (owing in some measure to a cannon shott passing through the Consultation room) with the utmost clamour, confusion, tumult and perplexity, according to custom without coming to any determination or resolution, but good naturedly leaving every member to imagine his proposals would be followed and put in execution.

June the 19th by daybreak the enemy begun playing upon the church and factory from two eighteen pounders they had brought to the *buzar*, a little beyond the jail house; as likewise from two small pieces they had placed by the horse stables, and with their wall pieces and small arms from every hole and corner, which made it very dangerous standing on the bastions and curtains, they being but ill contrived; and as all our endeavours to dispossess them of the houses proved ineffectual, and appearing in prodigious swarms all round the factory, struck a panick in many, expecting every moment the place would be stormed; and as no quarter was given, none could be expected; to avoid which the following gentlemen between 9 and 10 o'clock in the morning, took the liberty of going off in such boats as were lying at the *gotts;* Mr. Drake, Captain Commandant Minchin, Captain Grant

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Adjutant General, and Mr. O'Hara engineer, as likewise of the militia, Captain Macket, Lieutenant Mapletoft, and Ensign Douglas; with most of the principal inhabitants. Upon the Governour's going off, several musketts were fired at him, but none were lucky enough to take place. Those who were in the way, upon hearing the foregoing gentlemen had quitted the factory, as also of those who quitted it the night before, and seeing every ship dropping down, imagined the retreat to be general; which prompted many to go also that otherwise never intended it; for who could judge a Governour and most of his Council with his two first officers and engineer, as also most of the militia officers, would be the first to desert the garrison. Upon Mr. Drake's ship getting under sail, every ship followed his example, and in less than an hour's time not a boat was to be seen near the factory, nor a vessell in condition to move, but the Company's,[1] which run ashore shortly after, when those who were in the factory's retreat was entirely cut off. Upon which a council of war was called by those who remained, at the head of whom was Mr. Pearkes who yielded up his right to Mr. Holwell, declaring he did not think himself qualifyed for command in such distracted affairs. Mr. Holwell therefore was unanimously appointed to act in his stead, and Captain Lewis, master attendant, (Captain Graham having carryed away one of the Company's sloops before the attack) and the defence of the place was carryed on briskly, under the new commanderie, but with the loss of several people; among the killed was Lieutenant Smyth and the wounded Ensign Coales of the militia, and Piccard of the military. About noon all those that were posted at Mr. Cruttenden's, Mr. Eyre's, and the Company's houses, as also at the church, were ordered to come into the factory, not being able to defend their posts any longer. The enemy the remaining part of the day and night were tolerable quiet.

June the 20th, early in the morning the enemy attacked the N.E. and N.W. bastions with great fury, but after a dispute of about three hours were obliged to retire. It was then judged proper to write to the Nabob, and propose terms of capitulation. Accordingly about 2 o'clock in the afternoon a person came with

[1] The *Prince George.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

a flagg of truce to acquaint Mr. Holwell that the Nabob was very ready to come to terms of accommodation with him; and desired he would cease firing, and that they would do the like, which was assented to, and the troops ordered to take some repose during that interval of time; upon which the enemy took that advantage, and about four o'clock in the afternoon, under cover of a prodigious thick smoke, carryed the S.W. bastion by escalade, which made the party stationed there force open the back gate, to endeavour to save their lives by swimming or otherwise, but were most of them either drowned or cut to pieces. A party was sent which secured the gate again, but by the time it was done thousands of the enemy were under the factory walls, ready with bamboes to scale them, when it was thought proper to surrender to a *jemindar* who was already upon the ramparts, the number then remaining not being 200 and many of them wounded. Soon after the Nabob entered the factory attended by Meir Jaffeir, and demanded to know what was become of Mr. Drake; being answered he was fled and that Mr. Holwell then governed, he called him and assured him neither he nor any of his people should be hurt, but contrary to all expectation in the evening, all that remained in the factory were thrust into a prison called the Black Hole, to the number of about 147, where they remained till next morning, when those that were alive were let out, about 23 in all, the rest being suffocated in prison. The same day the Nabob issued out orders for every European to quit the place before sun sett under the penalty of cutting off their nose and ears. Most had the good luck to escape except Messrs. Holwell, Court, Burdett and Walcott, who were sent in irons to Muxadavad but soon after released. The same day orders were given out by beat of *tomtom*,[1] that the town should not any longer be called Calcutta, but *Allinagore*.[2]

In regard to the number of forces the Nabob brought against Calcutta, we have but very uncertain accounts, for being tollerable secure of success, the thoughts of plunder caused his being joined by some thousands that would not otherwise have fought for him. However by the best information I can get, his army consisted of 35,000 foot and 20,000 horse, 400 trained elephants

[1] Native drum.

[2] The City of Ali. Probably in honour of the Nawab's grandfather.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and about 80 pieces of cannon, but most of them light guns, and what were taken in Cossimbuzar factory. His army was divided in three divisions and commanded by as many general officers, who relieved each other every four hours during the whole attack; which made the duty very easy to them, but extremely fatigueing to the garrison, as they were by that means either attacked or kept in constant alarm during the whole siege. He had also 30 Europeans (most French men) in his service, for the management of his artillery, and full 40,000 persons who followed his camp. About 20,000 of his army were armed with musketts, match locks, and wall pieces; the rest, with the arms of the country, such as lances, swords and targets, bows and arrows, &c.; and in order for an encouragement for them to behave well, the Nabob paid them six months pay; indeed they refused marching without it, for it is a customary practice of the princes of the country to keep their military eighteen months in arrears, to prevent desertion. Most accounts agree that the number of his people killed was between 6 and 7,000 besides wounded. Among the former were a great many *jemindars* and principal officers, all of whom behaved with the greatest resolution and good conduct.

The fort of Calcutta called Fort William is situated close by the waterside and the river there judged to be a full mile broad, so little or nothing to apprehend from that quarter from the Moors, as they are not provided with any shipping of force, sufficient to withstand a Line of guns which are well covered by a strong breastwork. The fort itself lies North-North-East and South-South-West, and is an irregular building consisting of four bastions, one to the south-east, one to the north-east, one to the north-west and one to the south-west, calculated to mount guns. The gateway has —— guns to defend it, and the curtains to the southward are made to be supplyed with —— those to the eastward with —— those to the northward with —— and those to the westward with ——, however, the condition the factory was in, with an account of the military stores and ammunition that were in the garrison when the place was attacked, as well as what cannon we had mounted, I will defer mentioning till another occasion, as also a description of the town as well black as white.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Having now given an account of the loss of the principal Settlement the East India Company were possessed of in India, the reason of so extraordinary and sudden a revolution will undoubtedly be enquired into; to know what could induce the Nabob to commit so rash and precipitate an action, more especially to a sett of merchants who were judged to enjoy greater libertys of trade in his country than all the other foreign nations put together; but when the gross abuses of those indulgences are related an impartial person's surprize will in some measure abate. It is well known that the Company's affairs are conducted here, at each of their head Settlements, by a Governour and Council, (to which station their servants formerly succeeded according to seniority) and that each Councellor had the charge of some post or separate branch of the Company's business; accounts of which were delivered into Council monthly or otherwise, as the nature of the post would admit of, and which posts were also regulated according to their servants' standing in the service. This custom the Court of Directors thought proper to break through in the year 1750, by sending out Mr. Holwell, (who formerly served them at Calcutta in quality of surgeon) and appointing him perpetual *Zemindar*, and in Council; which high power of his, according to the custom of the country, extends to life and death, corporal punishment, fines, &c., and that without controul or consulting anyone. Judge then how obnoxious a person invested with such power must be, to a trading people, particularly if he made good his promises to the Company; which was to encrease their revenues double to what former *Zemindars* had done. The revenues of the *zemindary* formerly seldom or ever exceeded 60,000 rupees *per annum*, indeed more frequently were much less, arising from the sales of a few dutys which were farmed out, fines, *etlack*,[1] &c. At this time, as provisions and other necessarys of life, were more reasonable at our Settlement than at the other factorys, as also having little to fear from the *Cutcherry*,[2] and everyone being admitted to have recourse to our Courts of judicature, then it was that trade

[1] Charges for guards placed upon accused persons so as to ensure their not leaving Calcutta before trial.

[2] Probably means the Zemindar's or Magistrate's Court, which dealt with the natives only.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

flourished at Calcutta, and was crowded with merchants and inhabitants, not only with the natives, but with all sorts of nations. But upon Mr. Holwell's arrival here, a sudden and quick change of affairs was soon seen. He had agreed with the Company to encrease their revenues, which must be done by some methods or other or he get into disgrace and turned out of his posts; accordingly he set out with converting most bodyly punishments into fines, not that a wealthy person by that means had it more in his power than a poor one to commit any crime, for the nature of the misdemeanour was not so much consulted as the circumstances of the aggressor who was to be fined accordingly. The *etlack* was another method made use of to increase the Company's revenues. The more confusion, wrangles and disputes among the natives the higher is the *etlack*, which is levyed as follows:—a black fellow shall meet another in the street or elsewhere, whom he shall call by some nickname or otherwise use ill, the offended person has no more to do, than to run to the *Cutcherry*, and demand a *peon* (or soldier of this country) to be put as a guard on him who offended him, till such time as the dispute can be heard and decided by the *Zemindar*. Let what will be the nature of the complaint, a *peon* is not to be refused, for it is to be observed, every *peon* thus employed receives four *punds*[1] of *cowries* a day, one half for his own subsistance, and the other half of the Company's account; which *cowries* are to be paid by the aggressor, or as the *Zemindar* shall pass a decree. I have known upwards of 2,000 complaints standing on the *Cutcherry* books at a time, and scarce ever less than 1,500, most of which could have been decided in a day, had it not been for the encrease of the Company's revenues; whereas if the controversy was ended in six months it was lucky, a year, 18 months, nay 2 years, was no uncommon thing, and what was still a greater hardship, the party's being obliged to attend the *Cutcherry* as often as the *Zemindar* went there himself not knowing when the dispute would be heard. The rice farm was also run up to a most exorbitant price by his emissarys; which made that article more than as dear again as in former years, to the great prejudice of the poor inhabitants. The *Buzars*[2] also sold in proportion, which made the grievance at last so great

[1] The pund is eighty *cowries*.

[2] The markets of various commodities.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

that several applications were made by different grand jurys to the bench of justices for redress; but as it was to encrease the Company's revenues they were always overlooked. One shamefull method among others of adding to the revenues was of admitting licenced prostitutes, which were admitted to be under the Company's protection, by paying a monthly tribute. In a word no one method was neglected, that could be thought of, which was not put in execution to make good his promises to the Company. Repeated complaints were all this time made by the merchants, the lower people not daring to do it, and as both rich and poor and of all degrees and denominations found themselves at last entirely deprived of the Company's protection and liable to be daily fleeced or punished according to the caprice of a single person, prefered living under their own Government as well as of that of foreign nations to that of ours. It is incredible to think the number of inhabitants that quitted the Settlement soon after Mr. Holwell's *zemindary* commenced, and many, whose affairs would not admit of it, kept their goods out of our districts. As the natives were not always satisfied with his decrees, application was frequently made to the *Durbar* by them for redress; which caused the Nabob to make continual complaints in behalf of his subjects of the gross abuse of the *Zemindar's* power and of the insults shewed his flagg by stopping boats with his *dusticks*, and obliging many to pay our customs after having paid the Government's duties. The gentlemen of Council could not be ignorant of these repeated complaints, but had their different reasons for not taking notice of them. Some who were jealous of the *Zemindar's* power, were pleased and prompted him on to do everything that would ensnare him; while others, who had little or no interest in Europe, chose to be silent rather than dispute the encreasing the Company's revenues. So good a servant who so heartily studyed the Company's interest, they thought could not be invested with too extensive a power; accordingly upon the renewal of our Charter, the black merchants were excluded all manner of benefit of our laws, and an order came out prohibiting their having recourse to any of our courts of judicature, and that all disputes, arising among the natives, should be finished and decided by the *Zemindar* only. This caused great discontent among the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

merchants, who, though they lived under the protection of the British flagg, were excluded all manner of benefit from it. They now looked upon their fortunes in trade no longer secure, as one black merchant might purchase of another and pay him at his pleasure by keeping fair with the *Zemindar;* which prompted many to leave off business entirely, and many more to quit the Settlement, and all this caused by an imaginary proffit of about 80,000 rupees *per annum*. Our Honourable Masters finding the sweets of the aforementioned increase of their revenues by appointing a perpetual *Zemindar*, appointed also a perpetual warehousekeeper, namely Mr. Manningham; who not thinking the colony sufficiently distressed by the daily desertion of its inhabitants, seemed willing to lend the *Zemindar* a helping hand; accordingly, proposes a new method of providing the Company's investment, which was to turn off all the Company's old *dadney*[1] merchants, many of whom had served them full 50 years, and to send their own *gomasters* to the *aurrungs*. It caused some debates in Council but was at last consented to, though I do declare I do not know one single advantage that could accrue to the Company by it, and on the contrary a thousand ill conveniences and disadvantages attended it. It is true indeed it was putting an immense fortune in the warehousekeeper's pocket by making him master of all the *aurrungs*, for as the Company purchased nothing but with ready money, the merchants could never refuse taking the warehousekeeper's cotton, &c. &c. in part payment of their investment and purchases, and that at an advance price; which, to my knowledge was the case, when other people could not sell a rupee's worth of goods; and the amount of his sales invested on the Company's account without any risk of markets, &c. And who was to complain against all this? Indeed severe reflections were made by many, but who dared speak out against a person protected and appointed by the Company? A *Bramin* in particular lodged a formal complaint against one of our *gomasters*, for some fraud committed in the *Cotta*,[2] which the poor fellow had no sooner done, but he was so severely persecuted by the warehousekeeper,

[1] Native merchants who advanced money to the weavers as agents of the Company.

[2] The Factory.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

as reflecting on his conduct in accusing him of keeping servants guilty of frauds, that, instead of the Council's hearing what he had to alledge, they obliged him to give security of his not quitting the bounds (though he belonged to another country) and that, if he did not make good his assertions, might expect to be very severely chastised for his insolence. This happened about twelve months before the loss of Calcutta, and which dispute ended with the taking the place, though the man made continual applications to be heard, and proved a sufficient check for everyone to hold his tongue afterwards upon that subject. Among the many other disadvantages to the Company by providing their goods at the *aurrungs*, I look upon the risking their money to be none of the least; for upon the least dispute with the Government it was so much cash certainly lost, an instance of which we lately experienced; neither do I think much advantage could acrue to the Company by it, for as every *gomaster* was obliged to give responsible security before he was employed, I leave any one to judge who is acquainted with the nature of the natives here, whether any one among the blacks or Armenians would run such a risk without a proffit, or be security for any except their own servants or creatures; so that in fact it was only purchasing our goods at the *aurrungs* of the Calcutta merchants, instead of receiving them at Calcutta, and whether the difference of the price was adiquite to the risk, I leave the Company to judge, for my own part I am fully convinced of the contrary, for when we contracted with the merchants, it was always by muster,[1] and one became answerable for the other for what money was advanced any of them, and a limitted time for the delivery of the goods under a penalty of ten *per cent.* Now here was no risk at all, whereas by the present method of collecting their investment, they were obliged to take such goods as were sent them by their *gomasters*, as it must be supposed they were bought on the Company's account and on the best terms they were possible to be bought for; neither any damage to be recovered, from the goods ariving late, or not in time for the dispatch of our shipping; as it was, with regard to our *dadney* merchants, as well as every piece of their cloth, examined by the Company's own servants in their *Cotta*, with the musters contracted for, and they

[1] Sample.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

obliged to make good any difficiency in the quality of their goods, as well as of short measure, a head of which was always kept on their books, and came to a very considerable sum of money annually. And as the *gomasters* were frequently obliged to advance sums of money to forward their investment, making now and then bad debts was unavoidable, as we experienced on closing some of their accounts; however this last year the gentlemen of Council took it under consideration to remedy all these things, and it was proposed by some of them, to send a Company's servant to each *aurrung*, as a check on the *gomasters*, but this was most furiously opposed by the warehousekeeper, though finding a majority against him, was at last obliged to give it up; however he succeeded so far, that none should be sent above the station of a writer, and they not to interfere with the *gomasters*, or the *gomasters* with them, but to be there ready to hear any complaints against the *gomasters* to the Company's prejudice. Sending those who so lately arrived in India, was in reality doing nothing at all, for it is not to be supposed they could be either acquainted with the language or the sortments of goods. He also requested, that Malda *aurrung* should be exempted having any one sent there, knowing it to be the principal *aurrung* where business was to be transacted, either for sales or purchases, which was granted him also. At the same time Mr. Frankland, sub-export warehouse-keeper[1] (and his co-partner) being obliged to take charge of the *Buxey's* post, instead of the next person to Council being appointed sub-export-warehouse keeper according to custom, as it is a post of the utmost consequence to the Company, the warehousekeeper insisted on appointing his own deputy or laying down his post; which the gentlemen could not dispute with him or at least did not chose to do it, having indulged him with it before in regard to Mr. Frankland who he persisted on making his deputy, and who would have continued in that station without doubt, had not a better and more proffitable one offered itself to him, that of being *Buxey*, and his former post, of full four thousand rupees a year, was given to one of the youngest writers in the service; who though ever so deserving a young fellow could not be any ways qualyfied for the post; however his being ignorant of it was what

[1] Paymaster.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the other required. But the article wherein the Company were the greatest sufferers was in the sales of their broad-cloth, &c. for when I arrived here, auroras sold from 80 to 85 rupees *per* piece on an average, lead at 10 rupees *per maund* and fine copper at 63 rupees, and everything else in proportion. The merchants at that time purchased freely, being sure of disposing of their goods to the Company in return, so that if they only got prime cost at the *aurrungs* for what goods they bought, it answered their purpose the same as sending all money, though a great advantage to the Company. At that time our annual investment, was generally about 60 or 70 *laacks* of rupees, which was always collected in without the least difficulty, whether they had money or not, Companys' bonds never being refused; nor do I believe they paid the least trifle more for their cloth by buying it on credit, than they would otherwise have done, with ready money. But upon turning off the merchants the price of cloth, &c. fell greatly. Auroras sold at about 61 rupees *per* piece and the other articles sent out sold in proportion, for few of them purchased afterwards but such as were creditors of the Company's, and then would give but ready money price; neither would they have bought any at all, could their demands have been discharged with cash. The Company's debt in 1751 was full 60 *laacks* of rupees, and still they had as much creditt among the merchants as if they did not owe them a shilling; whereas they were no sooner discarded, but they immediately begun drawing their money out of the Company's hands, and as they were all partys concerned took measures among themselves to regulate their purchases accordingly, and not to run up the price of goods as usual, so that by the difference of the Company's sales in India they must have been great sufferers, and having reduced their debt to about seventeen *laacks* (and that money being mostly deposits for orphans, widows, &c.) am satisfied that in a very few years their broad cloth, &c. would not have sold at any rate. As an instance, they sent last year six hundred bales of cloth to Bombay which they could not get the merchants to purchase; a thing never before known. Another ill convenience of purchasing our goods at the *aurrungs* was we could get no more than we had ready money to pay for; whereas before the merchants' creditt

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

was added to the Company's to set the weavers to work, who work from hand to mouth only. The Company having reduced their investment of Bengall goods so considerably of late years shews they could not find vent for a greater quantity of them in Europe, though the same tonnage was sent out as usual, which must be attended with a considerable expence to them, 40,000 rupees *per annum* for every ship that is not dispatched according to charter-party. The foreign nations supplying themselves with India goods on their own bottoms, must certainly be one reason of the defects in our sales in Europe. And their ships meeting with such success here I must in some measure attribute also to the turning off our merchants; for when they found themselves neglected by us they took all measures of encouraging the Danes (who have now a factory here) as well as the Portuguese and Prussians; and these settled but within these 3 or 4 years, our merchants supplying them plentifully with whatever they want, whereas formerly, when they were in our service, were always ready to distress them what laid in their power. The French and Dutch also have almost doubled their investment of late years; for they now each dispatch to Europe four ships, and I think we have reduced ours, from 5 and 6 ships to $2\frac{1}{2}$, which is what we dispatched last year, and as much as we could have contrived to have done this, had no misfortune happened to us, butt a very small investment to support so great a charge as they are obliged to be at in maintaining so large a garrison.[1] Having accounted for the decay of the Company's affairs here, it will in some measure make appear the cause of the late revolution in these parts, the merchants, the support of all nations, turned off and discarded, the natives in general discontented by the *Zemindar's* oppression, the Councellors divided among themselves, added to a total stagnation of trade, caused continual cabals and disputes, when a grand contest arose between the *Zemindar*, the Council, and Mayor's Court in regard to power. The former not being satisfied with the unlimited power he was already invested with, but aimed to bring every Portugueze, Armenian, and others not born of European parents but in the country, (here vulgarly called *Fringes*,

[1] Compare these reckless statements with the Dutch account of the state of trade in Bengal, *e.g.* on pages 306, 307.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and are Christians) also under his *zemindary*. The Mayor's Court endeavoured to maintain their rights and priviledges, and to prove that only such as were born, and looked on, as *Mogul's* subjects, was understood by the Company's Charter should be excluded having recourse to our Courts, and not such who were deemed Christians, let them be of whatsoever denomination. The dispute became extremely hott, and the *Zemindar* engaged the Council in his quarrell, as judges of the power the Company had thought proper to invest him with, for the encrease of their revenues, which caused many severe and reflecting letters to be wrote on both sides, and as no one could judge after that how far the *Zemindar* would stretch to extend his power, it alarmed everyone; and Mr. Plaisted, a member of the Court, by being a little more plain and vigorous, in standing up for the priviledges of his country, was aimed at by the Board as an example to the rest, and was accordingly (though appointed Master-attendant by the Court of Directors the year before) ordered to Europe by the first ship. The affair was soon after compromised by referring the whole to the Company. The dispute arose from a Portugueze woman thinking she had great injustice done her by a decree from the *Cutcherry*, and applying to the Mayor's Court for redress. If there was a general discontent among the inhabitants, Europeans as well as others, it subsisted no less among the members of the Council Board. Scurrilous language when they ought to have been transacting the most serious affairs of the Company's was no uncommon thing among them. Judge then how they must have been looked upon by the rest of the world when they entertained so very indifferent an opinion of one another. I have endeavoured to make appear how very instrumental the *Zemindar* and warehousekeeper both were in reducing one of the most flourishing settlements in the world, to a perfect fishing town.[1] The one under pretence of a trifling encrease of revenues was lucky enough to blind his Masters, as the other was by saving them a few trifling charges in their *Cotta*, with a promise of doing miracles; and so, good and certain foundations laid for making their own private fortunes, though on so severe terms as the ruin of the Company, (that, had not the

[1] It is said Dupleix threatened that he would reduce Calcutta to this condition.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Nabob frustrated their schemes by giving a finishing stroke to what they seemed to so heartily labour at), they would have been both in Europe, and deemed the best of servants, and left such as were behind them to be blamed of ill conduct for not being able to perform impossibilitys in carrying on their schemes any longer. The method these two gentlemen also took, in trifling with each other's character, is most extraordinary and diverting, by appearing professed enemys to one another, that, by that means they might divide the Council and know the reigning sentiments entertained of them by every one as well Council as inhabitants, and as by that means they became perfectly well acquainted of what they were accused off, omitted no opportunity of giving each other all manner of advantages to justify their characters. Manningham embraced every occasion of taxing the *Zemindar* with his extra judicial proceedings in the *Cutcherry*, and that in the most severe terms possible, by which means the rest of Council lay dormant, thinking one to accuse sufficient at a time; but in this was their error; for his accusations were no more than to give the other an opportunity of vindicating himself of whatever he might be accused; for upon answering such accusation the other was certain to drop the dispute, as looking upon himself confuted and in the wrong; so never attempted to make good his accusation any further. This compliment was reciprocally paid each other, and many folios of their letters transmitted to Europe, when at last their writings became so voluminous as obliged the Company to order them to desist troubling them any more and to direct Mr. Manningham not to concern himself with the *Zemindar*'s business, and Mr. Holwell not to interfere with the warehousekeeper's affairs. Thus they succeeded at last, in what they so heartily struggled to bring about. After having spoke so largely of the gross abuses of two of our principal posts, it will probably be asked what the rest of our Council were doing all this time. I am very sorry to say that they were not blessed with such happy talents as could be wished and the Company's affairs to be supposed required. However as there was not any among them over ambitious, they were quiet and contented with such posts as came to their lott, and if they made a little more than ordinary by it it could not be of any great consequence to the Company, and

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the Governour in such a case is more to be blamed than they, as he has the monthly inspection and regulating of the whole. Indeed men of some genius are greatly required at our subordinate factorys, as well as their being men of some resolution, to keep up the dignity of their Masters; which had we had at Cossimbuzar at this juncture, affairs would in all probability have turned out much different to what they did. I must confess there are two material posts here that concern the Company very nearly and want to be regulated; which is the storekeepers, the general and military, as also the *Buxeys*. The two former has the care and charge of providing all military and naval stores, and the other the care of repairing and making all buildings as well as the paying away all money and providing such articles as are wanted at our different Settlements in India. As for the import-warehousekeeper, it does not lay in his power to prejudice the Company in the least, or the accomptant either, who is second in Council, and as for the collector of the consulage, the revenues of that article has been so trivial of late years that that post is almost sunk to nothing at all, for what with a general decay of trade in Calcutta oweing to the reasons before mentioned not a twentyeth part of the goods were now exported as in former years, so that they nearly decreased one revenue almost as much as they encreased the other. As to the register of the *dusticks*, as the abuse of them is what is strongly alledged against us by the Nabob, and partly what induced him to carry things to the extremitys he did, I shall leave it, till I mention his complaints against us, with the provocations given him; but before that I would wish to mention a few words in regard to Mr. Drake our Governour, or more properly of our Chief in Council, for the Company never thought proper to confirm him,[1] a thing I believe that never was practized before

[1] In the India Office, Home Series, Misc. 24, under date February 11, 1756, there is a copy of Mr. Drake's commission, beginning as follows: 'The United Company of Merchants of England, trading to the East Indies. To all to whom these presents shall come, send greeting. Know ye that we, the said United Company, reposing especial trust and confidence in the fidelity, prudence, justice, and circumspection of Roger Drake, junior, Esq., have made, constituted, and ordained . . . the said Roger Drake to be President and Governor of and for all the said Company's affairs in the Bay of Bengal and other the places and provinces thereunto belonging in the East Indies, and also to be our Governor and Commander-in-Chief of our Fort

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

at any of their Settlements in India, that a person should be thought capable to govern four years running and not to be deemed worthy of being invested with his usual titles and dignitys; though in reallity had he been a man of conduct and spirit, he had it full as much in his power to have acted at his own discretion the same as if he had been appointed; but as affairs stood, his Council certainly made no small handle of it, which made him also appear very cheap among the natives. Mr. Drake's conduct of late years has without doubt been very blameable. That indiscreet (not to say worse) affair with his sister,[1] is a circumstance can never be forgiven him, for the crime was not only itself bad but after that every man of character and sence shunned and avoided him, and was the means of his running after and keeping very indifferent company, and of committing a thousand little meannesses and low actions, farr unbecoming any man much more a Governour. However, I will say no more on so disagreable a subject, for though I have so extensive a scene before me even by writing of facts concerning his ill conduct, they are so numerous, that by a stranger I should undoubtedly be judged guilty of partiality, but refer his character to a letter here annexed, in answer to one he wrote the Prussian chief,[2] judged a man of very good understanding, wherein he requested to know the sentiments of the different nations concerning the character he bore among them; and particularly in regard to his conduct during the late troubles. The letter in my opinion contains some truths, though interspersed with some vile aspersions. The Dutch and French finding such discord and animosities among us, were no ways backwards in fomenting them, it was rather diversion to them, as likewise to the natives and many others.

Having now mentioned the situation of the Company's affairs at this Settlement during the present administration, I cannot help thinking but that they were in a very declining unfortunate

William in the Bay of Bengal and all the towns and territories thereunto belonging, &c., &c.' It would seem, therefore, that he was appointed not only Governor, but also Commander-in-Chief. The *Chesterfield*, which brought out this Commission, did not arrive at Calcutta until January, 1757.

[1] Apparently Drake, on the death of his wife Mary, married her sister Martha Coales or Coates. These ladies were daughters of Thomas Coales, Factor.

[2] Mr. Young. See letter No. 48.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

condition before the troubles commenced, and impossible to have supported themselves long had there not soon happened some sudden and happy change of affairs, by the Company's having sent out better heads and persons more zealous for their service. I have also annexed a list of what forces the place was able to muster, both military and militia, and have before mentioned the situation of our garrison and what defence it was capable of making had not the works, &c., been grossly neglected of late years.

It now rests to give some account of our late disturbances with the Government, which, without doubt will amaze all Europe, as well as the proprietors of India Stock and Court of Directors. I have already observed by what means Seir Raja Doulet came to the Nabobship, upon which occasion it is usual according to an old Eastern custom on being appointed Prince of the country to be visited by the different foreign nations and proper presents made him. This in the first place we neglected doing, and being a man of an infinate deal of pride and ostentation (although abandoned to all manner of vice) gave him no small vexation, not only by our slighting of him as we did but as there was very strong parties against him in the country which made him apprehensive we favoured some one of them. As soon as he had settled affairs at his capitol called Muxadavad, he marched towards Rajumull to subdue Sucajunk, Nabob of Purnea, as before related. He had not proceeded farr on his march when his conjectures in regard to the English he had further reasons to think were just by our having given protection to Kissendasseat son to Radabullub *duan* of Dacca, both father and son had served under Alliverdi Khawn for many years, and as there was great reasons to apprehend they had been guilty of many frauds and amassed immense treasures by oppression and other unjust ways, an account of their administration was demanded by Seir Raja Doulet, to know what was become of the King's revenues collected by them for some years past. Radabullub no sooner got intelligence of what was going forwards but makes interest with Mr. Watts to get protection for his son and treasure in Calcutta, which was granted him and also for his whole family. By the time everything was secured the Nabob became more pressing with Radabullub, and positive orders given him to immediately obey, and deliver him

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the accounts he demanded, when he acquainted the Nabob that his son was fled and taken protection with the English with everything appertaining to him, which rendered it impossible for him to comply with his demands, and as it was currently affirmed that he had carried off with him full fifty three *laacks* of rupees, the Nabob to outward appearance made a point in having him delivered up, which the Council were made acquainted with, both by messages from the Nabob as well as from many of the principal people at the *Durbars*. However they had promised Kissendasseat protection, and protect him they would let what would be the consequences of it, under pretence that it would be a reflection to the nations to deliver up a man to the hands of his enemy that had once taken protection of the English flag, especially as nothing criminal had been proved against him that demanded it; for that the Nabob knowing he was extremely rich only wanted to plunder him, besides might be a precedent that might prove hereafter very prejudicial to the Company, as the Nabob by the same rules might send for any other person whenever he pleased. All this time the Private Committee was extremely busy in taking measures to frustrate the Nabob's schemes, thinking (I presume) all would end with a sum of money, according to the custom of accommodating all former disputes, neither were they certain but he might get routed by the Purnea Nabob, who by this time had received a *phirmand* from the *Mogul*, appointing him Nabob of Muxadavad, and should their expectation answer did not doubt but they would be amply rewarded for their trouble, and of getting from him also a restitution for whatever expences the Company should be obliged to be at on account of *Durbar* charges. However all their sanguine hopes miscarryed, for Seir Raja Doulet soon reduced Sucajunk to subjection and marched back towards Muxadavad with great haste, where he arrived about the middle of May. At this time the Nabob's intentions were publickly known, that he would either drive the English out of their Settlements or know if they proposed acknowledging him Prince of the country and intended obeying him as such. For my part, so far from thinking that Kissendasseat, or Radabullub his father, had anything to fear or apprehend from the Nabob, that on the contrary they were on extreme good terms, and that his flight at that time was a pre-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

meditated affair in order to ensnare some of our gentlemen, who they imagined would take the bait on account of lucre; which scheme, God knows, too well succeeded and answered their purpose; for it is to be observed, that had the Nabob an intention of having Kissendasseat in his custody, or really judged him and his father guilty of frauds, would not the father have been apprehended, or have fled also as he had the same opportunity as the son? whereas on the contrary he remained at Muxadavad, and, though to outward appearance was greatly threatned and in disgrace, was found at last much in favour with the Nabob, at least allowing him to have been in the wrong had actually settled matters with him. But what is still more apparent, Kissendasseat had no sooner heard of Seir Raja Doulet's intention but he secretly raised a body of men with arms and ammunition in his service, and when things came to an open rupture immediately threw off the mask, refused coming when sent for by the Governour and stood upon his defence, having packed up his effects and put everything in a readiness to join the enemy. Some may imagine that by this conduct he endeavoured to ingratiate himself and get into favour again. It may have been the case, but even then one would think some notice would have been taken of his past conduct had he been really culpable of what he had been so strongly accused, but on the contrary as soon as the Moors were in possession of the fort (where he was confined as before mentioned) he was instantly released and shown even by the Nabob himself the greatest honour and favour. Another affair which also caused some disputes, was sequestering the effects of Pramjeeboom Coberage, *gomaster* to Raja Tillekchund of Burraduan, on account of a debt said to be owing by the latter to one Mr. Wood (though a disputed account). Upon the complaint being filed in court, Pramjeeboom Coberage refused giving an answer as it was not a debt contracted by his master but a bond endorsed over to Mr. Wood by a person with whom his master had large accounts and had creditted him for the amount of it some time before, besides his master was no subject of Great Britain, but held a very considerable post under the Nabob, to whose Courts of judicature he was willing the affair should be carryed and promised to abide by such decree as should be given. Besides

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

the person with whom he was in dispute was also a *Mogul's* subject, so he did not think our Court had anything to do with the dispute. The usual forms of Court being over, and the time elapsed for his or his constituent's appearance, in default whereof a warrant of execution was issued out to seize his *gomaster's*, Pramjeeboom Coberage's, house and effects. Upon the sheriff's officers going there, the fellow immediately quitted his house and went to inform his master of what had passed. In his house were found a quantity of money, jewels, and goods, and also a great many bonds and papers, some for very considerable sums, both from Europeans as well as blacks. Tillekchund no sooner heard of the seizure of his house and effects to answer a demand of 7,000 rupees, but he applyed to the Nabob for redress. The prodigious troubles in the country at that time (being about the time that the old Nabob died) prevented his complaint being heard, or it would certainly have been attended with a stoppage of our business at the *aurrungs;* however it still helped to inflame the natives against us, as well as to add one, to many other complaints made to the Nabob against the English. The Council it is true, did take so much notice of it, as to inform Mr. Wood that he was wrong and might, if he persisted on his demand, involve the Company's affairs, but never once forbad him doing it, and offer to take the affair in hand themselves as they ought to have done.

As I have already mentioned sufficient in regard to the *Zemindar's* transactions in the *Cutcherry*, I need say no more relating to the Nabob's perpetual complaints against that Court, and as to the affair of the *dusticks*, there is certainly a greal deal to be said in favour of both partys, the Company by their *phirmaund* granted them many years ago by the *Mogul*, were exempted paying any duties to the Government, for which reason it was an article at their sales of broad cloth, &c., that the purchasers should be indulged with a *dustick* for the transportation of such goods, as should be bought at their sales, to any *aurrung* they thought proper to send them to. Undoubtedly the goods were no longer the Company's property after they were sold, whereas on the contrary, could not they have found vent for them in Calcutta, they must have been sent to the *aurrungs* on their own accounts, and that the *dusticks* were a great help to our sales is beyond dispute.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Dusticks were also granted to the merchants for bringing to Calcutta from the different *aurrungs* such goods as they contracted for. Now they alledge also that the goods were not properly the Company's property till such time as they were prized, and that the merchants made that a plea for importing their whole investment to the great prejudice of the Nabob's revenues; the Company never taking a fourth part of what was imported in Calcutta by their merchants. If I am not mistaken the Company also indulged their covenanted servants with *dusticks* for their private goods too, and from the different *aurrungs* also, at least it was what was practised here, and none allowed any except the Company's covenanted servants (and to those before mentioned) which was certainly no small benefit to us as it gave us a considerable advantage over all other merchants, especially when goods were wanted proper for the *aurrungs*, for it is to be observed every servant acted for himself, the same as the Council acted for the Company; namely, not only demanded *dusticks* for what goods we sent on our accounts, but also gave *dusticks* to those to whom we sold goods, and the like for what goods we had occasion for from the *aurrungs;* so that certainly what with the Company and their servants *dusticks* together, the merchants did contrive to get their goods to and from Calcutta, without ever paying the Government's dutys. The gentlemen in Europe cannot pretend to accuse us in that article, because one of their Council was always appointed Register of the *dusticks* which were always given in the Company's name, and passed for their property, let the goods belong to whom they would; as indeed by their *phirmaund* I believe they were no ways entitled to a *dustick* themselves; only for what was really their own property, and on their own account. Their granting *dusticks* also brought them in a small revenue, as they were rated at three rupees each. How far the Company were culpable in endeavouring to make the most they could of the indulgence granted them by the King I will not undertake to say; as also letting their servants abroad partake of it, but then it is to be considered it was the only particular in which they could favour them; passes and indeed every other circumstance in trade being common to every inhabitant whether free merchants or otherwise. As the Company received

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

so much benefit in not being obliged to pay Customs to the Government, their Council ought to have been extremely tender in not giving umbrage in that article. It not only saved them five *per cent.* on all their exports and imports, but kept them clear of the Nabob's Custom House officers and others belonging to him, who are eternally tormenting the other nations and stopping their business upon the most trifling occasion; as likewise their being obliged to put up with a thousand insolencys from every dirty fellow that thinks proper to insult them, and but seldom redress to be had, except a sum of money paves the way. However of late years they have paid no more regard to our flagg, or hardly so much as to the Dutch and French, our boats being perpetually stopt at every *chokey*, and no other method of getting clear but by paying a few rupees whenever they were stopt. Both Company's boats and others were obliged to do the same at many places, for it was not worth while to complain, to be obliged to wait two or three months to get the boats cleared, being liable all that time to pilferage. Things were carryed at last to that pass that many preferred paying the Government's Customs and taking their *dusticks* to the Company's, particularly Messrs. Manningham and Frankland who employed Coja Solomon, an Armenian, to do it in his name for them, though very contrary to the Company's standing and positive orders, and undoubtedly ought to have been very strictly kept up for it was giving up to the Moors the very point they aimed at, to bring us to the same terms with other foreign nations, and have us as much under their subjection.

As to the new fortifications we were building the Nabob's other complaint against us; it is a very trifling one and shewed he only wanted to search a quarrell; for the only additions we made was begun full two years ago, and consisted of a small redoubt with four guns built at Perrins for the conveniency of a small guard we always kept there, being the termination of our bounds; and could be of no manner of service to the garrison of Calcutta on account of its great distance from it, a full league at least. As for the other building near it which he pretended also to take for a fortification, it was only an octagon summer house, and all the other alterations and ammendments we made at

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Calcutta was repairing the Line of guns towards the waterside, which was of no very material consequence considering the ill condition of the garrison in general, and was only an amusement for the *Buxey*.

I have now mentioned all the Nabob's complaints, the abuse of the *dusticks*, building fortifications without his consent and approbation, giving protection and preventing his bringing his own subjects to justice, and of the *Zemindar's* extensive power and authority. How farr he had reason to complain against our gentlemen, or which of them were in the wrong, I will leave the reader to judge; however before I mention the particulars of the Council's conduct during the siege and afterwards, I will relate what is privately talked of and thought to have prompted the Nabob to do what he did. I have recited how Seir Raja Doulet came to the Nabobship and the pretenders to it, which as the European nations imagined would cause some disturbances in the country, reinforced their forts at Cossimbuzar, as we did also, and it is thought at the same time underhand promised to aid and assist the *Beggum;* and as Seir Raja Doulet was a person universally hated and despised by his people, as well by the courtiers as commonallity for his great cruelties and debaucherry, it was surmized by our Private Committee that he would never be able to carry his point, for which reason it is thought they gave orders to Mr. Watts at Cossimbuzar to give assurances of friendship and assistance to the *Beggum*, in behalf of Morada Doulet an infant under her tuition, if she chose to dispute the affair with Seir Raja Doulet, but Alliverdi Khawn, who was a very prudent man, was sensible of what might happen after his death, and took the necessary measures to prevent it by reconciling Seir Raja Doulet with his Ministry, at the same time obliging him to give up the administration of affairs for some time to them, and be governed by their council and advice. He also took some pains in getting over to his party some of the principal officers of his military that had served him in all his warrs very faithfully and valiantly, but had retired from Court to avoid the troubles it was judged were coming on, had not he taken all these necessary precautions to prevent it. He likewise sounded the Dutch and French, and found they were more inclined to peace and quietness than for

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

war and troubles, noways consistant with the interest of a sett of merchants. The English were the only warlike people that were willing to have a Nabob of their own if possible, or carry on the same farce which has been carried on so many years on the Coast, so much to the Company's prejudice, and have been both attended with the fatal loss of their factorys and that in an equal shamefull manner. I cannot help thinking but that the old Nabob as well as Seir Raja Doulet were both of them extremely well acquainted with what we were about, and that Kissendasseat's affair was only a plot laid to be more certain of what our intentions were, and when he found we were determined to oppose his authority, took a resolution of putting it out of our power to do him a prejudice which is what made him so expeditious in attacking the place before the Rains set in, and at a season of the year when it was impossible for either Fort Saint George or Bombay to succour us. To me it is very surprizing Mr. Watts should have been so ignorant of what was going on at the *Durbar*, for he very particularly recommended this Kissendasseat to Mr. Drake's and Mr. Holwell's protection, requesting they would shew him all the civilitys in their power, which they certainly did; for even when it was publickly known that he was raising forces for the Nabob and stood upon his defence against a parcell of *peons* who were ordered to bring him to the factory, a party of Europeans were ordered to surround his house, but to use no violence or seize his effects. The man of course kept his house and the party obliged to stay there from 10 o'clock at night till 8 the next morning, when upon application of the officer on command to know how to proceed, directions were given to force him out of his house and to bring him and his brother with their arms and ammunition to the factory, but to be very cautious of not touching anything else. However, just as the party had reached the town, they received a further order from Mr. Wood, whereby they were directed by Mr. Drake and Mr. Holwell to seize all his effects, and that he (Mr. Wood) was to shew where they had been concealed, but the party having a great number of prisoners and a large quantity of arms and ammunition and fatigued with duty, having marched a considerable distance, were obliged to leave the plunder of the house to others, concerning which there are

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

various reports, but as they are not as yet confirmed will avoid mentioning them, not doubting of so great a piece of villanny soon coming to light. If true that our Private Committee have been guilty of what they are accused in interfering with the Government, they have certainly brought upon the Company and others all these disturbances. For my part I am satisfied the Nabob must have had further provocation than what he complained about. Mr. Watts leaving his factory in so simple a manner can never be forgiven him, for had he made a small defence of a few days only the gentlemen of Calcutta would have had more time to have made preparations for the Nabob's reception. Indeed there is this to be said in favour of Mr. Watts, that after the loss of Cossimbuzar he laboured what laid in his power to accommodate matters, nay even declares he could have done it by paying a sum of money, but that the Governour, &c., would not hearken to any proposals he made. Coja Wazeed and many other considerable black merchants also laboured very strongly to settle affairs between us, but all would not do; they always imagining the Nabob would never carry things to the extremitys he did, but would be contented with stopping our business and bring us to terms that way. All this time, though the Governour and Council were in high spirits most other people were dejected and uneasy, knowing the ill condition of the garrison, want of ammunition and all warlike stores, as well as people to defend the place, which they never thought on or gave themselves any trouble about, in so much that many inhabitants endeavoured to prevail with the leading powers to settle affairs on the best terms they possibly could for the present, and that they would willingly contribute paying their proportion of the necessary expences for so doing. However they were deaf to all these proposals, and defy the Nabob's forces they were bent upon, let the consequences be what they would. The Nabob all this time was making great preparations, and finding neither the loss of Cossimbuzar or anything else could intimidate us, made the best of his way towards Calcutta; then it was they began to open their eyes and see their folly for having carryed things too far to retract. The Nabob's forces flushed with the easy conquest of Cossimbuzar and elevated with the thoughts of plunder, made them march with double

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

expedition, and, as they approached the town the consternation became the greater, particularly among those who had been most active in carrying things to the extremitys they did. The enemy had even attacked us before we knew for a certainty that they were upon their march, so little care was taken for intelligence; whereas on the contrary the enemy were perfectly well acquainted with the situation of our affairs, for having already mentioned the reasons the merchants as well as the rest of the inhabitants had to be disgusted with the late treatment they had received, were no ways backward in giving the enemy such intelligence as they wanted in regard to the defence we were capable of making; as likewise knew as well as the Council themselves, everything that passed at the Council Board; a most shamefull affair, for the unhappy divisions among themselves not only prompted one to disapprove what the other proposed and did but made a meritt of informing everyone he mett of it. But what is worse, and what I am very sorry to say, that some of them either oweing to a general stagnation of trade or want of creditt, were drove, or otherwise were mean enough to throw themselves on the merchants to that degree, that they had as much the command and direction of their words and actions as they had of their own servants; and all this by keeping up some of their sinking creditts.

When we had intelligence of the Nabob being greatly advanced on his march, upon a survey of the garrison there were found only 30 pieces of cannon mounted, 26 of whose carriages were obliged to be condemned they were so bad and rotten. As no time was to be lost every carpinter, both white and black, was pressed, and I think did contrive to put about 49 carriages together which were mounted, some towards the waterside, the rest upon the Points; for as to the curtains, upon their being surveyed they were found in so bad a condition that it was not judged prudent to mount any there. Before the batterys were erected without the factory, the military officers and everyone were very urgent for demolishing all the houses round about the factory within gun shott, knowing that if once the Moors gott possession of the white houses there would be no such thing as standing on the factory walls, for not only the embrasures were extremely large and ill contrived, but two or three of the houses as well as the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

church were within pistoll shott of the factory walls and commanded the whole garrison. However the pulling down the houses was a thing they would not think of, not knowing whether the Company would reimburse them the money they cost, or at least no other reason was ever given for it, as if that was a time in such imminent danger to consider of private property and to prefer running a certain risk of loosing the whole, rather than to sacrifice a small part, is to me something very astonishing.

What could induce the gentlemen to attempt carrying on a war with the Government so ill prepared as they were, I cannot comprehend; and how shamefull has their conduct been could they have compromised matters, as every one admitts they might have done it. The French and Dutch acted in a quite different manner, for when the Nabob passed their factorys, in his way to Calcutta, and demanded the delivery up of their garrisons, they immediately made him a tender of the keys, at the same time gave him to understand, that as they were only a sett of merchants that were indulged a liberty of trade and had been for many years, by former Princes of the country, hoped he would not think of ruining them as well as the Company they represented, and that if they had been guilty of any mismanagement that gave him offence, they were ready to make atonement for it by paying him such a sum of money as he required. Accordingly things were settled by the French promising payment of 350,000 rupees, and 450,000 the Dutch agreed for, part of which was paid down, the rest to be paid on the arrival of their shipping, but they took care to inform their other settlements of what they had been compelled to do, and shortly after got sufficiently reinforced to pay him his ballance with powder and shott.[1] What was the reason we could not have acted as politically as they, I cannot conjecture. There is certainly some reason to think we acted upon some other scheme, and had not quite so much the Company's interest at heart as they had, or at least that we had not quite so much wisdom. Indeed could we have resisted the Nabob's forces till succours arrived to us from the Cormandel coast and Bombay, there must have been glorious plunder for some of our Gentlemen in Council, for those in particular of the natives who had received protection of our flag would

[1] This statement seems to have no foundation in fact.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

have been made to pay for it, as also no small contributions raised round about the country; besides the plunder of the river would have been very sufficient to have made a few persons' fortunes as nothing could have passed and repassed but must have fallen into their hands; nay so sure were some of them of success against the Nabob (or at least appeared to be so) that vessells were fitted out to make prizes of the enemys ships homeward bound, two of which were taken, besides a considerable sum of money freighted on our vessells, from Surat and other places, was stopt; and though the Company had then in the river several small vessells that might have been sent on that expedition they were all put aside, and a vessell sent (which Mr. Drake purchased a very considerable part of) upon the expedition, that the whole plunder might be their own.

The ill condition the factory was in, is not to be expressed; the embrasures both upon the Points and curtains, many of them quite broke, no guns mounted, or carriages to mount them on; and as for granades, bombs, &c., none except a few cohorn shells, which had been filled so long that they were good for nothing. Small arms a very few, and powder only 350 barrells, many of which were so bad and damp that it was not fit for use even for the cannon. Though the Company allow six companys here, including one of artillery, consisting each of 120 effective men, when they came to be mustered turned out only 190 blacks and 60 Europeans, a very sensible defficiency instead of 600 men which we ought to have had, and all the subordinates also very well supplyed. The defficiency of military is an article of which Mr. Drake cannot excuse himself; for they are mustered before him from time to time, and stood the Company one month with another 10,000 rupees *per mensem* pay only. Mr. Drake to my knowledge was not ignorant of the gross abuse in the muster rolls, and I suppose had his reasons for passing it over in silence. What will anyone think of our gentlemen's conduct in acting as they did. Considering the situation of their affairs it was very great neglect also of theirs, not taking more care than they did of the subordinate factorys; for had they been advised in time to withdraw their effects instead of leaving it to the last moment great part of their investment might have been saved, whereas they

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

neglected it so long, that there was no time to save much; indeed a trifle was saved at Jugdea, as also at Ballasore, but at Dacca everything was lost, and Mr. Becher our chief was wise enough, upon being asked by the Government's people to give a general discharge for the whole Company's investment, to do it the same as if he had been in actual possession of the whole. Great care was taken to secure a sufficient quantity of provisions for the garrison for full six months, but cooks were never thought of or cookroom furniture, and instead of having the factory as clear as possible, there was at least 3,000 unnecessary people there, so that there was no such thing as moving in the night without tumbling over some of them, besides being lumbered with chests, bales, and the like, that it rather looked like a fair, (except the dejected looks and countenances of the people) than a garrison put in a posture of defence against fifty thousand men at least.

The enemy had no sooner attacked the outer batterys, but they carryed them, for having at once taken possession of all the out houses, flanked the batterys in such a manner that it was impossible for men to stand to the guns. Then it was that every one was in an uproar and exclaiming against the gentlemen of Council for not permitting the houses to be knocked down. The shipping all this time were not idle, many people instead of minding the defence of the garrison being busy in saving their valuable effects and shipping them off. And I cannot help thinking but that the second expedition against Tanna Fort was not so much to annoy the enemy as to cover the *Neptune* snow, while she passed, otherwise what could be the reason of not landing the men or the ships attacking the fort, neither of which was done. However, if that was the intention, it had not the desired effect, for the redoubt at Perrins being attacked about the same time the party sent down the river was recalled, and also the ships, to defend the avenues of Calcutta leading to the river, and prevent the enemy's landing in the heart of the town. The Moors had no sooner drove us from the eastern battery, but those at the other outer batterys were immediately ordered to retire to the factory, though there was no manner of occasion for it in the least, for the front of the garrison defended all that part of the town, and the northerly part of it was so thick of houses and those large and so

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

strongly built that they were not easily to be demolished, and of consequence ought not to have been quitted to the enemy at any rate, for by their being possessed of those houses they at once commanded the whole factory. Besides, had the enemy drove them by force from their guns, they could always have secured their retreat by water, the river not being above 20 yards from their battery. The Company's House to the southward of the factory was also of full as much consequence, being a very large strong building of itself, and a new addition of a close veranda quite round it, and extremely near to the garrison walls, so, that battery should also have been maintained as long as possible; and as they had the same advantage of the river as the other battery had, there could be nothing to apprehend of being cutt off. However upon the eastern battery giving way on Friday the 18th June in the afternoon, every thing was in confusion, and how to retreat and save effects was only thought of. And as the women were sent on board that evening Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel of the militia and in Council, went off also, and could by no means be perswaded to return. All our outposts being quitted and our strength being too well known not to be sufficient to resist so powerfull an enemy already in possession of the whole town, one would imagine that in such extremity of affairs they would have sent to the Nabob, and endeavoured to have adjusted matters with him on the best terms they could; but though they knew the factory could not hold out above two days more at the furthest no flagg of truce was shewn, or any methods taken to accommodate and settle matters. Indeed a council of war was held about 9 in the evening, and contrary to the usuall system of holding all councils of war with privacy and secrecy, it was held in the most publick manner that it possibly could be, and a number of people admitted to it that were no ways intitled to be there. The officers unanimously gave it for their opinion that the garrison was not tenable, both for want of men and ammunition, though the Captain of artillery gave in his report at the same time that there was about two days of the latter left and no more, at the rate it had been expended that day. As the gentlemen did not think proper to propose terms to the Nabob, a retreat was proposed to be made the next day in the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

afternoon, which was certainly time enough as there was no fear of the factory's being taken by storm, and Mr. Drake undertook in the meantime (or at least was desired by his Council) to secure the Company's books, money, plate and effects, which might have been done with the greatest ease imaginable, at least all that was valuable, as there was no want of shipping, many having been taken up by them on the Company's account, or people to carry them off, as may be judged by the many unnecessary people that were in the factory. However all this was neglected, though it is shrewdly suspected the Company's books were saved, which caused many disputes in the fleet afterwards, as also many severe reflections against some at the head of affairs. Mr. Manningham and Mr. Frankland had no sooner embarked, but early on Saturday morning the 19th June, dropt down with his ship, and was soon after followed by the rest of the shipping as farr as Govindpoor's Reach. This alarmed everyone, seeing their retreat going to be entirely cut off, and much more so, when intelligence was given that Mr. Drake was also on board the shipping (having from the beginning kept a boat in readiness, and his footman to defend it with a drawn scimitar) with Captain Grant the Adjutant General and many others. Those who first heard of it took the advantage of such boats as were lying then at the factory's back gates, and so made their escape also, leaving full 200 behind in the garrison, blacks and whites, a sacrifice to cover their retreat, not a single boat being left to carry them off. Proposals were made by several both to Mr. Drake and Mr. Manningham to consider of those unhappy sufferers that were left behind, and endeavoured to perswade them to send boats or vessells to bring them away, and not let them fall into the hands of a barbarous enraged enemy, from whom no quarter could be expected; however they were safe themselves, and were perfectly indifferent of what became of everyone else; so sent them no manner of assistance at all, although within sight of the town, not a league from it; which is something so scandalous and inhuman that it is a reflection upon the nation; nay, what is still worse, when they were informed that the Company's ship was run ashore, but might be gott off with the assistance of an anchor and cable, and might also be the preservation of the lives of those who were left in the garrison, even that

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

was refused being sent, though they had sufficient belonging to their ship to have done it, and not distressed themselves in the least; but gave for an excuse that the bad season of the year was coming on, and they did not know but they might be in want of them themselves; but how easy was that objection to be obviated, the outward bound shipping were daily expected, both Europe ships and country ones, that could have easily supplyed their wants; however could not they have been easily supplyed from Chandernagore or Chinsura. I know upon our applying for some soon after as well as many other necessarys, they were ready enough to assist us with everything they could with safety to themselves, and more was not to be expected. However, let the worst have happened, was it not their duty to run some little risk for the preservation of so many lives, such an unprecedented affair surely is not to be paralleled among the greatest barbarians, much more among Christians.

On Sunday the 20th June about 4 o'clock in the afternoon the factory was taken, when many lost their lives, some by the sword, and some drowned who thought to swim and save themselves; the remainder who bore arms about 147 were crammed at night in prison, and remained there till next morning, when the prison doors were opened to lett what remained alive out, whose number I think did not exceed 23. Those unhappy gentlemen's deaths, as well as those who dyed after Mr. Drake's and Mr. Manningham's departure, may be as much laid to their charge as if they had cut their throats; because they not only acted basely in quitting the garrison, and carrying away the shipping, but actually had it in their power to have saved every man's life afterwards, whereas most perished that were left after their departure, except those who gott intelligence first of their being gone and seized the boats. And thus was Calcutta lost by ill conduct, not to make use of harsher terms.

In what a situation affairs were in before the attack of the place, I have already mentioned; so that it now only rests I should ascertain the Company's losses, which by the nearest calculation is about ninety-five *laacks* of rupees, including the subordinates and *aurrungs*, cash, plate, goods, &c. (each *laack* is 100,000 rupees, and each rupee 2s. 3d.) besides the loss of a

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

year's investment, a ship's cargoe lying ready in the *godown*, packed and ready to send off, there were also 600 bales of broad cloth not cleared out, as likewise a quantity of copper, lead and iron, as for the ballance of cash it did not surpass 80,000 rupees, having been at a monstrous expence in making preparations for the siege. The enemy were no sooner in possession of the fort, than they begun to demolish the fortifications and carry away the useless guns, of which we had a very great quantity, though never gave ourselves any thoughts of mounting them, or ever repairing the garrison till such time as the enemy was marching to attack it. The plunder the enemy got from the inhabitants must have been immense and cannot fall short of 200 *laacks* of rupees. The White Town run almost in a line with the river, close to the north and south parts of the factory, and I believe might be about a mile in length, but of no great breadth (except a parcell of scatered houses are included) many of which were noble large buildings; and as for the Black Town which adjoined to the White, it could not be less than four miles in circumference, that part to the northward of the factory where most of the natives dwelled, it not being anything so considerable to the southward.

There is one thing I have omitted mentioning, the terrases of the curtains were in such a bad condition as would not admit of cannon being mounted there, particularly to the southward, owing to the beams being entirely decayed and rotten, which they could not be ignorant of, no cannon having been mounted there for some years; and upon endeavouring to mount some on this occasion one of the carriages almost broke through the terrass, so that the 49 guns we had mounted, for which new carriages had been made for the whole (except four) after the troubles commenced, were mostly placed on the bastions, and over the front gateway; for as we had little or nothing to fear by water, only 12 were placed on the Line of guns, and as the factory would not admit of mounting heavy cannon, neither would the time allow, or had we materials to make carriages, so were obliged to make use mostly of 9 and 6 pounders. It is true there were 3 or 4 eighteens, but were lost at the out batterys; not that there was any want of large cannon, having a great quantity of them in the garrison,

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

and that the gun carriages were one and all condemned two years ago the Governour and Council cannot dispute, for when Captain Jones[1] pressed them to make new ones, and get the old ones repaired; and represented to them the ill consequences of their not doing it, in case of a sudden attack (which he did by several letters to the Board) instead of their ordering it to be done, was desired not to trouble them with his nonsense, for they knew what was necessary to be done as well as he did. Colonel Scott[2] upon a survey of the factory, as well as Mr. Robbins[3] also, recommended its being done; as likewise, that they would think of the necessary repairs of the fort, and represented the necessity of its being done to the Company.

Likewise another article which I have neglected to mention is their having applyed to the Dutch and French for assistance as soon as they heard of the loss of Cossimbuzar, and were answered by the former, that as they belonged to a trading nation must beg to be excused interfering with any of our disputes with the Government, more particularly as their instructions forbad it, for by their doing it they might involve themselves in the same troubles hereafter; but advised us to accommodate matters as soon as possible, and that they were willing to assist us in that, and use their utmost efforts to bring things to a happy conclusion, whereas our acting to the contrary might prove very prejudicial to the rest of the trading nations. The French on the contrary in their letter thought we were most bitterly ill-used, and offered to enter on an offensive and defensive alliance with us, but that as they judged their factory to be much more capable of making a defence than ours, recommended our quitting ours and joining them, by which means we might prevent the Nabob's marching down to Calcutta; their flattering, insinuating, deceitfull stile, pleased some of our gentlemen abundantly better than the other's blunt way of writing, as it answered their purposes better; accordingly served the first with a formal protest, and wrote the

[1] See letter from Captain Jasper Leigh Jones to the Council, Fort William, dated August 4, 1755.

[2] Colonel Scot died in 1754.

[3] In Letter to Court of January 4, 1754, paragraph 131, it is stated that Mr. O'Hara was sent to Calcutta with Mr. Robins.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

latter a very genteel letter, thanking them for their offers of assistance, and as we were in very great want of ammunition, requested they would spare us a quantity of powder and shott. To this we had no reply till the Nabob was near Calcutta, when the Frenchmen put off their grimace, assuring us of the impossibility of their complying with our demand as they might provoke the Nabob by it; and considering his large army on foot, might take it into his head upon giving him the least umbrage to attack their factory also, as it was reported he was going to do ours; and in such a case they should be in great want of stores themselves; so wishing the gentlemen success in their undertakings, assured them how much they were their humble servants. That they should expect the French would assist us, and be dupes to that fantastical nation, is most intollerable; a sett of people whose breach of faith we have so often experienced, not only in Europe, but at all our foreign Settlements likewise. However when the Nabob demanded supplys of powder from them soon after, they could then find sufficient to spare him 150 barrells, and could connive also at the desertion of near 30 men which joined the Nabob's army before the taking of Calcutta, and commanded the artillery under Monsieur Saint Jacque.

The fleet remained in Govindpoor Reach till the 21st June when they were joined with 2 or 3 country ships just arrived from different ports and in the evening dropt down for Fulta; but their apprehensions and fright was such in passing Tanna Fort which fired a few random shott at them as they passed, that many ran foul of each other and were lost; a list of which I have hereunto annexed, and among the rest was the *Neptune* snow with near 3 *laacks* of rupees in cash on board her, besides a great quantity of valuable effects. And this happened within gun shott of the whole fleet, and might have been easily saved, as many others likewise, by any of the large ships dropping an anchor near them, to have covered and prevented their being plundered, till the flood came in; for as they run ashore upon the ebb, they in all probability would have gott off then, whereas they were lost for want of a little assistance which indeed was as soon to be expected from the enemy as from Mr. Drake and many others. Everyone was greatly discontented at this conduct

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of theirs and complained greatly; it was a most mellancholly sight to see such a number of men, women and children, without a change of cloths, victuals or drink, and many obliged to be exposed to the inclemency of the weather day and night, the shipping were so much crouded. The 25th and 26th the fleet arrived at Fulta, and in their passage down were joined by many of our inhabitants that had made their escape from Chandernagore and Hughly; as likewise the begining of July with those that were at Luckypoor and Ballasore; and at the end of the month with those from Dacca. The ship *Delawar* also arrived from Madrass with Major Killpatrick and a reinforcement of 226 men. During this time several letters were sent to our Settlements at Madrass and Bombay, to demand succours from them and to forward letters to Europe, that the Company might be informed of the unhappy situation of their affairs in Bengall, and for fear the *patamars* should miscarry it was proposed one of the Company's sloops should be dispatched to Madrass, and a servant sent to represent our distressed condition; to hurry them as much as possible to send us sufficient forces and ammunition to re-establish ourselves. Mr. Manningham had interest enough among the Council to get himself appointed for that embassy, which caused great disgust in the fleet; it was remonstrated to Mr. Drake that he was a very improper man to send of such an errand, both on account of his scandalous conduct at Calcutta, which he would be more employed in endeavouring to vindicate than minding the Company's affairs; besides the advantage it would give him of writing to Europe, and representing circumstances just as he pleased in regard to the loss of the place; of which he could be no judge, having kept out of the way from the beginning of the troubles. Mr. Drake promised fair that he should not go, however as every one knew him to be a man of no manner of resolution, a kind of a written remonstrance was sent him, signed by many Company's servants and others in the fleet requesting Mr. Manningham might not be sent; as may be seen by the accompanying copy of it;[1] upon which Mr. Drake gave his word he should not go, however, that only made people who were acquainted with his character more apt to think that he

[1] See No. 49.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

would, as Mr. Drake was unhappily a little given to deceive by fair promises, and as many expected so it turned out. Mr. Manningham was sent, and as it was necessary that some one should accompany him, he requested it might be Monsieur Labaume and Mr. Nixon, the latter his own writer, and the former a French officer at Chandernagore, who was confined there for taking a drubbing from another officer, and made his escape in disguise to Calcutta; a very proper deputy to represent the Honourable Company's affairs. However, they went to Vizagapatnam and there landed; and Mr. Manningham after trifling away near a month, found the fatigue too great for him to proceed overland to Madrass, so sent Monsieur Labaume there; but how he was received, I don't know, or what success he met with; however, upon his return they bestowed a captain's commission on him, as a reward for the trouble he had taken, though directly contrary to the Company's positive orders that a Roman Catholick should be employed in their service; and so severe particularly in regard to the military, that they are not even allowed to marry a Roman Catholick. The Company's servants being one and all set aside and the preference given to a foreigner caused much uneasiness; however Mr. Drake and his Council were extremely indifferent about that, they knew the one could make no discoverys to their prejudice, and the others might have represented them in their proper colours. The junior servants' antipathy at last grew so great against some of the Council's ill conduct, as made many use all possible means to get clear of them, and as they refused any one's quitting the place, except they chose to throw up the Company's service (which no one could do in the situation affairs stood without being severely reflected on) begun scrutinizing a little to know by what authority they acted, and whether or not by the loss of Calcutta and the evacuation of its dependancys they had not forfeited their stations, particularly those of them who run away and behaved so shamefully afterwards in obliging the captains (as owners) of the vessels, to drop down the river and leave so many unhappy persons behind; as likewise refusing the least aid and assistance to the ships that unfortunately run ashore, either by sending their boats to help save the people that were in them and their effects, or to help get the vessells off. In answer

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

to which Mr. Drake directed the Secretary to write to the junior servants and inform them that he did not any longer look upon themselves as Governour and Council, but as agents for the Company.[1] A copy of which note I have taken for the reader's perusal; however a short time afterwards they thought to continue their titles would do them no prejudice, so took that of Governour and Council of Bulramgurry, a little factory we had near Ballasore, and were obliged to evacuate, but the Marattoes, professed enemys to the Government, (and are little better than robbers) undertook to protect us if we were inclined to hoist our flagg there again, and as it was a long way from Muxadavad, and little to be feared from the Nabob in case we did it it was agreed upon that it should be done, and Mr. Boddam sent there as chief, to provide provisions and necessarys for the fleet of men-of-war, which were daily expected, but the gentlemen at the Coast were not so expeditious as might be expected on such an occasion, for it was the middle of October before the ships were dispatched, a time of year when it could not be expected they would arrive in less than six weeks or two months, whereas had they been dispatched when they first heard of the loss of Calcutta, they might have run it with ease in 6 or 8 days. His Majesty's sloop the *Kingfisher* at last arrived and brought us the agreeable news that the gentlemen at Madrass finding no appearance of a war in Europe between France and England, were making preparations to send us 750 Europeans and 3,000 *topazes*,[2] with a proper Train of artillery, by Admiral Watson's squadron, part of which forces arrived the beginning of December in the *Kent*, and may be imagined raised every one's spirits to the highest degree.

As for what was done after the King's ships and Colonel Clive arrived, I shall leave till another opportunity, and shall only mention that on the arrival of the sloop-of-war we hoisted English colours just without the Dutch bounds at Fulta, when Mr. Drake seemed to wake from his lethargy and affixed an advertisement at every publick place, wherein he desired to be accused in writing, and know in what he had been culpable and

[1] This paper, which must not be confused with No. 58, appears to be missing.

[2] Portugueze or half-caste gunners.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

guilty, during the late troubles. Everyone endeavoured to dissuade him from it by proving the inconsistency of his request; the Council in particular told him that the Consultations would make appear how farr they judged him blameable, besides as they could not be judges in their own cause did not think they had any authority to oblige people to deliver their sentiments to them, and that the Company only had power to do it. As the advertisement is an original of its kind, I have taken the pains to copy it,[1] to entertain the reader, and as I thought it was taking a shamefull advantage of the junior servants, who he wanted to intimidate, thinking that if they neglected taxing him according to his request, they would not be able to do it afterwards or any credit given to what they might write to their friends in Europe, I took the liberty of answering it, wherein I acquainted the Council Board of the ill consequences attending a junior servant's taxing a member of the Board of ill conduct without a sanction from the Company for their so doing, and that they must not conclude from no one's doing it at present that they should not, whenever the Company thought proper to demand it. One thing I have omitted to observe is the great mortality among the military in particular, during the time we remained at Fulta, whether owing to the badness of the water and diet or to the unwholesomeness of the place I know not, but a great many continued dying daily from the fleet's first arrival till October, though I must confess no manner of care was neglected, both in administering medicines to the sick and providing them with proper places to live during their sickness, a vessell having been taken up for the occasion, as also many others for the conveniency of the Company's servants and other inhabitants, and a table found them at first at the Company's expence, but when that was found to be rather too extravagant an allowance of 50 rupees per month extraordinary was allowed every European inhabitant; however in spite of all their care when the King's ships arrived we could not muster above 90 men, including Major Killpatrick's detachment and all that had joined us, who made their escape from the Moors. I have also forgott to mention that though the Council did not any ways think themselves secure till the Madrass detach-

[1] See Drake's letter to Council dated 17-25 January, 1757.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

ment arrived, still they had the same itching after plunder as ever, and upon hearing two Moors' vessels were arrived in the river sent down three armed vessells to take them, one of which was taken loaded with salt and Masulipatam bale goods; the other proved Dutch property. And in regard to intelligence we were as ignorant about what the enemy were doing as we were while in Calcutta; they did not attempt to molest us so the Council gave themselves very little trouble. In regard to their other transactions, it was reported Seir Raja Dowlett went against the Purnea Nabob as soon as he returned to Muxadavad from his conquest of Calcutta, and marched beyond Rajamull, in order to cross the great Pudda, and enter the Nabob of Purnea's territorys. Some say in doing which he was routed, others again that he gott the better of the Purnea Nabob, who died soon after; the truth of which I shall mention when I can do it with a certainty. Upon our first arrival at Fulta we found provisions and necessarys very scarce, though soon after, upon the Nabob's hearing (as is reported) that the ships intended leaving the river, ordered the *buzars* or markets to be opened, that he might prevent our plundering and get rid of us the sooner, and as the country was farmed by Monickchund the Nabob's *duan* (who was appointed President at Calcutta after it was taken) he directed the *buzars* to be continued, as long as we stayed at Fulta, when we had plenty of everything; indeed the *buzars* were stopped once or twice, owing to the gentlemen's stopping a parcell of salt boats, but upon their being cleared, again, we got provisions as usual.

110. *Extracts from a letter from the Select Committee, Fort Saint George, to Admiral Watson, dated* 13 *November,* 1756.[1]

We received late last night by the way of Bombay His Majesty's Declaration of War against France, which was enclosed to Mr. Bourchier in a letter from the Secret Committee of the East India Company, and was proclaimed on the 17th May in England.

* * * * *

If you judge the taking of Chandernagore practicable without much loss it would certainly be a step of great utility to the

[1] Received at Calcutta, January 13, 1757.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Company's affairs and take off in great measure the bad effects of the loss of Calcutta by putting the French in a position equally disadvantageous.

We hope that this enterprise should you think it proper to be proceeded on, may be effected, as well as the operations for the re-establishment of the Company's own Settlements, so speedily that Colonel Clive with the troops he carried with him may return to this coast early in the next year.

111. *Extracts from a letter from Select Committee, Fort Saint George, to Select Committee, Fort William, dated 14 November, 1756.*[1]

GENTLEMEN,—Last night we received news from Bombay that war was declared against France on the 17th May.

* * * * *

Mr. Bourchier writes that he is sending the *Royal Duke* with troops to your assistance and we learn by private advices that the *Revenge* and *Orixa* were also to be despatched to you and that the number of men intended to be embarked was about 500.

We hope that this reinforcement added to the men you had before will be sufficient for the protection of Calcutta, and therefore we have directed Colonel Clive to return here early in the year with the troops he carried or as many as can be possibly spared.

We have desired Mr. Watson if he thinks it practicable to dispossess the French of Chandernagore, not doubting but it will be of infinite service in your affairs. Should you be of this opinion we desire that you will enforce our recommendation.

We are, &c. &c.

112. *Translation of a letter from the Dutch Council at Hoogley to the Supreme Council at Batavia, dated Fort Gustavus, 24 November, 1756.*[2]

Under the impression that the expulsion of the English would have had some kind of influence on the obtaining of silk, we had communicated our ideas on the subject to your servants [of

[1] A letter to the same effect was sent to Colonel Clive, but Colonel Adlercron was requested to delay the public declaration of war until all the British garrisons could be first informed.

[2] State Archives at the Hague.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Cossimbazar] in our letter of the 7th July, but by their reply of the 19th of that month they gave us plausible reasons to the contrary, *viz.* that the English before the present rupture had negotiated for a portion of their investment in advance, and that this as well as a portion of the money advanced by the English brokers had been stolen by the Nawab's people and had disappeared.

This plundered silk has drawn your Honourable Company into this delightful trouble, and from this necessarily results most of the misfortune which we have so far suffered in the course of our affairs, although your servants at Cossimbazar seem to assert in their letter of the 26th ultimo that our before-mentioned distribution of money to the mediators [i.e., between the Dutch and the Nawab][1] was the probable cause. We hope that your Excellencies will see the groundlessness and folly of this accusation, when we, to continue the story of the silk, tell you that the principal nobles have tried to force both us and the French to take it over, and, on the refusal of your servants at Cossimbazar to do so, have uttered the threats and made the exactions mentioned in the Cossimbazar letters of the 15th, 18th, 20th and 30th August, 5th, 17th and 24th September and especially in that of the 26th October, whilst, the matter having not yet been concluded, we entreat your Excellencies for an opinion as promptly as possible.

* * * * *

The most important of the up-country matters having been dealt with in our respectful letter of the 5th July last, we request permission to act in accordance therewith. At the same time we mention in this letter a few further particulars, which were passed over in silence in our last letter for the sake of brevity, or which came to our knowledge or occurred only after despatch of the same.

According to the news from Cossimbazar by the 7th April of this year, before the Nawab Aliverdi Khan laid down his head, the aunt of Siraj-uddaula, the widow of the very wealthy Nawajis Mahomet Khan, was known to her nephew the young Nawab, to have put herself in a position to hold her own against him, but he, not troubling himself about trifles, forced her with her head servants, according to the Cossimbazar letters of the 10th and 20th

[1] See below.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

April, to put her head in his lap, and immediately after, before the body of his before-mentioned grandfather had been interred, caused himself to be proclaimed Nawab of Bengal, Behar and Orissa.

Thereupon followed the persecution of the English mentioned in our respectful letters—the first news thereof having reached us by Cossimbazar advices of the 3rd, 4th and 6th June, and amongst other matters that the officer of the before-mentioned fort there had in desperation put an end to himself, that the private soldiers had been put in irons, and the writers locked up in their rooms on rice and water. The book-keeper[1] at Dacca writes under date of 7th June and 1st July that the British were surrounded by 4,000 cavalry and musketeers. Subsequently, that only the military were taken to the Moorish fort but our other friends had obtained permission to transfer themselves with their women folk to the French factory, from whence later on they got away to their fugitive fellow countrymen at Fulta. In the same manner also those of Balasore who had retreated thence in good time. The rest who were taken prisoners at Calcutta have had, in the first fury, a dreadful time of it, about 160 prisoners being sent into the so-called Black Hole or *Donkergat* [Dark or Black Hole] in which there was not room for 40 prisoners, and there shut up. Thus they were trampled underfoot or suffocated, all but 15 or 16, who were brought out half dead next morning and being fettered were led by the Nawab in his suite in triumph to Muxadavad. However on their arrival they were at once liberated as well as the ex-chief of Cossimbazar with his Second and the others who had had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Moors.

* * * * *

From the above-mentioned letters written by the Nawab to the Director your Excellencies will see that the Nawab had employed the Moor merchant Coja Wazid as his agent, that he sent him to us to communicate his wishes both in respect of what he required in the attack on the English and also afterwards concerning the contribution we were to pay, letting no one else interfere in the matter but allowing him to act alone. Thus we were unable to pay the promised remuneration of 40,000 florins [rupees] to any

[1] Daniel Aukema.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

one but him, as he made use of no other of the proposed mediators. Coja Wazid restored us the balance after keeping 14,500 florins as his share by the order of the Nawab, as appears by our Minutes of the 16th July. As the others might be able to do us much service or dis-service we afterwards divided it as below:—

Rupees 10,000 to Raja Durlabh Ram,
4,000 to Rayrayan,
4,000 to Mohan Lal,
5,000 to Hugli *Naib Faujdar*,[1]

and the remaining 2,500 to Coja Wazid as a present to his broker and other servants, as appears by our Minutes of the 17th August and 12th October. Consequently as far as we know it has been distributed to the satisfaction of all who participated therein, for though by our letter of the 26th October your servants at Cossimbazar received full privileges for the purchase of silk, they ascribed the unfavourable course of our affairs to this very distribution. We take the liberty to leave it to your consideration whether we had any part or share therein, for supposing the above-named agent had wanted to keep the whole sum for himself and to further reduce the portions originally allotted to his proposed partners what could we have done to prevent it? We allowed him the amount and had nothing to do with anyone else. If the division is not now exactly as it should be, it is the fault of the Agent or rather of the Nawab who employed him.

Although the Nawab verbally promised the Director, in the presence of M. Armenault, the Head Administrator, at the time when they paid him their respects, to give us a general *parwana* confirming our privileges on his arrival at Muxadavad, still we have not yet been able to obtain it, and according to the reports of the Cossimbazar officials, their sollicitations dated the 19th and 20th July have been so far fruitless.

* * * * *

The remaining nations carrying on business here have, as well as the French, had to make a free offering according to the degree of each one's ability:

[1] Probably Nand Kumar.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

The Danes ...	...	Rupees 25,000
The Portuguese	...	„ 5,000
The Emdeners	...	„ 5,000.

After the English who had been expelled from the country had arrived at Fulta, they wrote us several letters for assistance in the shape of anchors and ropes, provisions, clothes, &c. We determined unanimously in our Secret Consultations of the 28th June and the 12th July not to yield to our compassion for them in their misfortune at present. Still since then having remembered that the French are inveterate enemies of the English we assisted the latter as much as we could, and on the 20th of the last-mentioned month we came to a secret resolution, in consideration of the close alliances between their nation and ours, to provide them with some food and clothes, intending to charge it to the English Company and also the anchors, 17 in number, which they took from Fulta for their use.

Before we leave this subject we request your Excellencies for orders for our guidance in case the English come to make reprisals and the Nawab should then order us, as he probably will, to bar their passage on his account by water and by land. For how are we to manage if he again comes and imposes a fine in cash for contravention of his, or as he calls them, the King's orders?

* * * * *

Concerning the foreign nations we may add, with reference to the English, that they still stay in the environs of Fulta, where owing to the unaccustomed manner of living and the bad drinking water they have had much sickness and death amongst their people. Still in the course of last month they have received a reinforcement of 250 men from Coromandel, but it is not sufficient to undertake successfully the recovery of the town of Calcutta, seeing that the Moors have had the same considerably strengthened and have garrisoned it with a formidable force of about 13,000 men. Therefore there would seem to be no better course for them than to try to come to some amicable arrangement with the Nawab, of which certainly there has been some talk, but the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

news which arrives here is so untrustworthy that we are not able to give any information about this at present.

The Council at Pondicherry and the French at Chandernagore not having approved, during this last year, the renewed and amplified cartel for the restoration of deserters on both sides mentioned in our respectful letter to your Excellencies of the 10th January last, we have been forced, in conformity with our resolutions of the 20th and 30th April last, to cancel it, and, at the request of that nation, to leave in full power and force the old one concluded in the year 1732 and the treaty renewed in the year 1750, since there was nothing else to be done.

The said nation has had its factory at Chandernagore considerably fortified during the troubles between the Nawab and the English, and has completed its fourth regular bastion, the foundation of which had been laid as early as 1750. Also all the houses which were standing somewhat near to the fort were pulled down in order to have them out of the way in case of necessity, and to make themselves as safe as possible not only against the Nawab but also the English, who supposing they make reprisals against the Moors, may, in consequence of the present disturbances in Europe, pay them also a visit as they pass.

We have this year received only two ships from Europe, but as a set-off we have received several from Pondicherry which left here again last September.

The *Gloire* and *Indien* [are at Chandernagore] and also the *Favorite* and the *Saint Contest*, of which the first and last are standing ready to depart for Europe, even if they should not carry any other cargo than that which the French themselves may have loaded them with, though they [the French] have done no business these last few years.

The Danes have received only one ship, named the *King of Denmark* from Tranquebar, which is to return before long, consequently this nation is getting on very badly, and the Emdeners still worse, for they have lost their vessel the *Prince Henry of Prussia*, (which they, disregarding our letter of the 10th January last, had hired out), whilst it was coming up the river, in such a way that scarcely any of the cargo could be saved.

The Portuguese trading here have not received a vessel for three

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

years, possibly owing to the troubles which have taken place in their capital of Lisbon. Finally it is not improbable that all the lately arrived competitors [for the trade of the country] will be getting very tired of Bengal.

Signed, A BISDOM, &c.

END OF VOL. I.

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